The LIFE *of* KNUTE NELSON

MARTIN W. ODLAND

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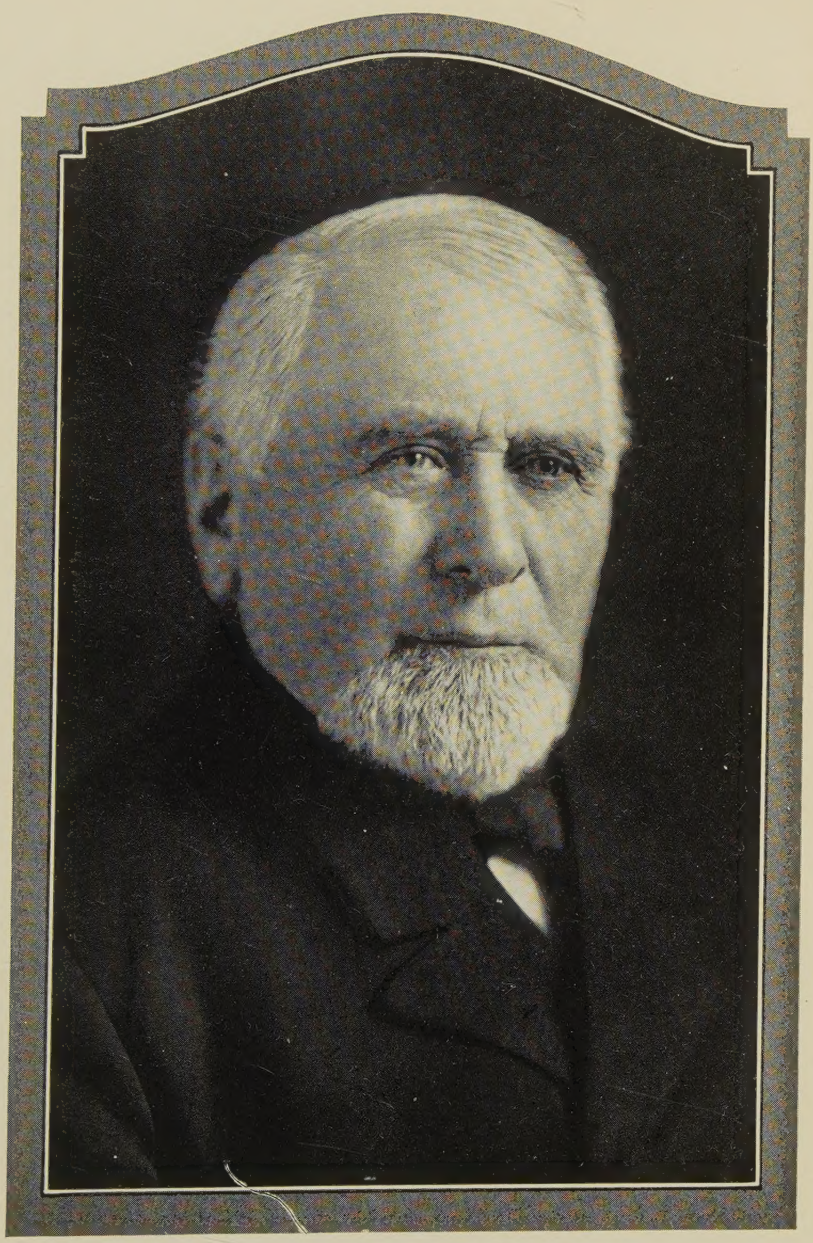

Photo by Lee Bros., Minneapolis

Knute Nelson

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BY

MARTIN W. ODLAND

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PREFACE

MOST of the matter contained in this book was first published serially in the Sunday edition of the Minneapolis Tribune. A few paragraphs have been omitted; others have been slightly changed, and considerable new material has been added.

The author entered upon the preparation of this work for two reasons: his interest in the subject, which began when he was a mere child, and his belief that a fairly complete and carefully authenticated biography of Knute Nelson would be welcomed by a large circle of readers and would be a valuable contribution to American history.

The author wishes to acknowledge with gratitude his indebtedness to various friends who assisted him in assembling the information on which this biography is based. He is particularly indebted to Mr. Albert O. Barton, of Madison, Wisconsin, author of "La Follette's Winning of Wisconsin" and other historical works, who searched the files of Wisconsin newspapers for references to Senator Nelson's political and legislative activities in Wisconsin and supplied other information of great value.

MARTIN W. ODLAND.

Robbinsdale, Minnesota,
August 26, 1926.

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THE LIFE OF KNUTE NELSON

CHAPTER I

FROM VOSS TO SKOPONONG

ON America's Independence Day, July 4, 1849, a young mother sat weeping on board a small schooner off Ellis Island. She was a penniless Norwegian immigrant, a stranger in a strange land, and the future looked dark, discouraging, ominous. She was alone in the world save for her little son, who stood beside her; there was no one to whom she could look for support.

Her son was a sturdy lad of six, dark of hair, blue of eyes, with a rather large head and a square face, expressing determination. He loved his mother with an intense love, and her sorrow distressed him. He would say something to cheer her:

"Don't cry, mother! We are poor now, but when I get big I shall be next to the king."

Big words, these, and both mother and son laughed about them many a time later in life when things did not seem quite so serious. Of course, the little fellow did not comprehend the true significance of his words, but his purpose was to assure his mother that some day he would be a big man in the land they were entering and that she did not need to worry. He had heard about the king of Norway and naturally assumed that there was a king in America also.

The sorrowing mother was Ingeborg Johnson or Johanson, from the farm, Kvilekval, at Evanger, Voss, where she was born November 18, 1814. Her son's name was Knut—or, as he spelled it when he learned to write—Knute. A few years later, after his mother had married Nels Nelson, of La Grange, Walworth county, Wisconsin, he became known to the neighbors as Knute Nelson, and this short, strong Norwegian name he bore to the end of his long life, and made it famous all over America and a large part of Europe.

For a boy destined to engage in the hazardous game

of Minnesota politics, a better name could not have been found than "Knute Nelson." "What's in a name"? A great deal. A rose may smell as sweet by any other name, but a man that aspires to serve his fellow men in office is out of luck, if his parents handed over to him an ill-sounding, ill-fitting name, which nobody can pronounce and nobody remember. "Knute" is a catchy name, a favorite among Norwegians everywhere; so is "Nelson," which is also dear to the sons of Old England, having been immortalized by her greatest admiral.

Voss is in western Norway not far from Bergen. Since the days of old it has been occupied by a bold, strong people, some of whom have tried to eke out a living from the soil, though the land is rough, while others have gone to sea to fish or earn a meager wage as sailors on merchantmen. Of course, between one and two thousand years ago, Voss also furnished its quota of Vikings, and Knute Nelson was rather fond of intimating that his remote ancestors were among the worst sea rovers that ever harried the coast of England, plundering, robbing, carrying off men's wives and daughters. This many of the good people of Minneapolis found it easy to believe in 1895, when, with violent hands, he tore the senatorial toga from the stately figure of William Drew Washburn.

If the scholars and anthropologists are right, there have been, since time immemorial, two distinct racial types in Norway. One is the blond type, fair-haired, light-skinned, blue-eyed. The other is the dark or brunet type, with black hair, dark eyes and usually of rather short stature. To the latter type Knute Nelson belonged, although his eyes were blue.

Evanger, where the future senator was born, February 2, 1843, lies high up on the side of a mountain, overlooking a beautiful fjord. The little hut in which he first saw the light is still standing, although in a somewhat dilapidated condition, according to Lauritz S. Swenson, United States minister to Norway, who first saw the place almost thirty years ago and again in July, 1924, when a memorial to Senator Nelson, erected by the

people of Evanger, was dedicated, with appropriate ceremonies, in the presence of a large gathering. The dedication address, in which he described the senator's distinguished career and eulogized his character, was delivered by Mr. Swenson, a life-long friend. The memorial is in the shape of a "bauta," with a medallion of Knute Nelson's likeness. "Senator Nelson's birthplace," says Mr. Swenson in a recent letter to the author, "lies some distance back from the main road and is reached after a rather steep climb. The locality is hemmed in by majestic mountains and the horizon is very limited."

The First Norwegian Immigrants

Although at various times during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries restless men from the north came to our shores, it was not until 1825 that emigration from Norway to the United States began on a large scale. In that year the famous sloop, "Restaurationen," sailed from Stavanger with fifty-two souls and landed at New York on the ninth of October. These "Sloopers," as they are called, settled in the town of Kendall, Orleans county, New York, but later most of them moved to Illinois, where, at Fox river, the second Norwegian settlement in America was founded, in 1834.

In 1836 and 1837 four shiploads of Norwegian immigrants, most of them from western Norway, crossed the Atlantic, bound for Illinois. During the forties an ever-swelling stream of Norwegian home-seekers, many of them from Voss, flowed into the rich Mississippi valley, and in 1849 Ingeborg Johnson decided to seek larger opportunities for herself and son in the same region. She was very poor and before she could land at Castle Garden was forced to borrow forty-five dollars from friends on board the ship.

The voyage across the Atlantic in the small sail ships which brought the Norwegian immigrants of the forties and fifties usually lasted at least twelve weeks. It was no easy matter to come to America in those days—far different than today, when giant steamers dash across in a

few days. All of the immigrants brought food for the voyage with them in heavy wooden chests.

From New York they went by steamboat up the Hudson to Albany, thence by horse-drawn boats through the Erie canal to Buffalo, and from there by lake steamers to Chicago or Milwaukee. By the time they reached their destination these poor pilgrims were both worn and weary, but they had infinite patience and knew how to suffer and endure.

Crucial Days in Chicago

Ingeborg Johnson had a brother in Chicago, and thither she went to seek a temporary home. The brother owned a little house on what was then called "The Point," a locality bounded on the north by Kinzie street, on the south by the river, on the east by Clark street. It was later occupied by the Northwestern railway station and tracks.

It is estimated that about 100,000 people of Norwegian lineage now have their homes in Chicago, a greater number than is found in any other city in the world, excepting Oslo. Norwegians began settling in Chicago as far back as 1836, and when Ingeborg Johnson arrived with her son, in the summer of 1849, there were a good many hundred immigrants from her homeland in the young city.

Ingeborg left her son in the care of her brother's wife, while she herself sought and obtained employment as a housekeeper. The boy was sent to a public school, together with his cousins. It was the first school Knute Nelson attended. It was called the "North School House" and stood not so very far from the Johnson home. It had four teachers, a man principal and three young women.

Knute went at his lessons with a will, although he was not so well behaved as he might be, and in a few months had not only learned his A B Cs, but had mastered the entire first reader. The remarkable industry for which he became distinguished asserted itself in his first term

From top: Knute Nelson's Birthplace; Mrs. Ingeborg Nelson; Private Knute Nelson at 18; Knute Nelson as State Senator.

at school, when he passed from the seventh into the eighth year of his life.

We may well imagine that life now took on a brighter hue for both mother and son. She did not complain because she had to support herself with her own hands; she was used to hard work in Voss. It was a joy to her that her beloved son was under good care and was already learning the language of their adopted country.

But a terrible calamity smote the community and the home of Knute Nelson's uncle. The cholera came like a scourge, as it did in other Norwegian settlements in Illinois and southern Wisconsin. Sanitary conditions in Chicago were of the worst, the ground being low and marshy. Hundreds died in the city. Knute and his uncle's family were all prostrated and all died save Knute and his mother, who came to nurse the patients.

"I recall to this day," said Senator Nelson in 1895, "the people dropping dead in the streets, right and left. For weeks we never looked out of the window, day or night, without viewing the passing of a burial coach."

After he had recovered from the cholera, his mother took Knute to a Norwegian family in the northwestern part of the city, where he did all sorts of odds and ends of household work, including dishwashing, in return for his board and lodging.

While he was living with this family, one of the boys, who carried papers, was taken sick, and Knute took his place. The paper he delivered and also sold on the streets of Chicago was the Chicago Free Press, which was later merged into the Chicago Tribune.

It is a noteworthy circumstance that the future senator, who was born in a rural community and always lived in a rural community, except during this brief interval in Chicago, should have earned his first money by the sale and delivery of papers, that most typical of all methods by which city urchins earn their first pennies.

Many are the successful politicians that love to declaim, or hear their supporters declaim, how they began their careers by selling papers on the streets. But Knute Nelson never made political capital out of this interesting episode in his life.

Family Moves to Wisconsin

Toward the close of the year 1850, after about fifteen months in Chicago, Ingeborg Johnson went with her son to live in the Norwegian settlement of Skoponong, where they spent three years. This settlement, founded in 1842, being therefore one of the oldest Norwegian communities in Wisconsin, lay in the town of La Grange, between Palmyra and Coldwater, Walworth county.

There, early in the forties, the Norwegian pioneer pastors, J. W. C. Dietrichson and A. C. Preus (a cousin of Governor J. A. O. Preus' grandfather), had organized a Norwegian Lutheran congregation and built a little log church. There, also, had been erected a typical pioneer school house, in which school was conducted three months every winter. This school was built of tamarack logs, brought from a government swamp five miles distant. Conditions in the neighborhood were about as primitive as they could well be.

For a month or more Ingeborg Johnson and her son found shelter in the home of Sjur Olson Holland, or Haaland. They then moved into a little "dug-out" of their own in the same neighborhood. They were still just as poor as when they landed at Castle Garden, and it was a constant struggle to eke out a bare existence.

"Some years ago," said Mr. Lars Lien of Renville, Minnesota, to the author, "while I was visiting at La Grange, a hollow or depression in the ground was pointed out to me as the spot where had stood the rude habitation in which Knute Nelson and his mother lived seventy-three years ago."

But, however crude and unpromising his surroundings, it was here that Knute Nelson received the inspiration of his life. The teacher in charge of the little school was Miss Mary Blackwell Dillon, a cultured, refined and highly educated girl, who had recently arrived from Ireland, where she was born and reared.

Until the year 1847 Miss Dillon's father was a wealthy queensware manufacturer, who lived in a fine mansion, elegantly furnished and containing a choice

library of the best literature. The children all received a good education, and Mary mastered, not only the English, but also the French and German languages. After her arrival at La Grange she became intimately acquainted with the Norwegian pastors, Dietrichson and Preus, and with their help also learned the Norwegian language, largely for the purpose of being better able to serve effectively the many little Norwegian boys and girls that came to her inquest of learning.

The financial crisis of 1847 wiped out Mr. Dillon's fortune, with the result that the family migrated to La Grange, Walworth county, Wisconsin. The land they got was poor and they would have failed utterly to make a living but for the efforts of Miss Dillon, who, together with her culture, had strong character and executive ability. Partly because of the money that her salary as teacher brought her, but more for the sake of rendering a real service to the poor, little, ignorant Norwegian children that gathered in the log school house, she applied for and received the honorable position of "school ma'am." The school was in progress when Knute Nelson reached the Skoponong settlement a month or two before attaining his eighth birthday. With his Chicago first reader in hand, he presented himself at the log school house.

It was an eccentric fate that brought together this noble and refined woman, reared in luxury, and the ignorant, but eager little Norwegian boy, who had been used to anything but culture and the finer things of life.

"What a wonderful woman Miss Dillon was!" wrote Senator Nelson to Mr. Bjorn Holland, Blanchardville, Wisconsin, his old friend and La Grange school mate, in March, 1920. "Of all the teachers that I ever had she was by far the best and did more for me than any other teacher to give me a good start in life."

To Mrs. Annette Van Hoesen Wakeman, of Chicago, a writer who interviewed him in the summer of 1895, he spoke at greater length of this unusual woman:

> She was the most remarkable woman I ever knew. Fitted as she was to fill any position, however exalted or exacting, she yet devoted herself with the utmost singleness of purpose to the poor,

ignorant children that gathered in that old log school house. She made our ink and quill pens and taught us the amenities of life and a thousand other things which were not in the books.

Outside the school room I was anything but a model. I was born a turbulent fellow and was ready to fight at the drop of the hat. Mary Dillon was obliged to whip me three times a day, but that did not alter my liking for her, for she was always just and generous. I was, notwithstanding the acerbity of my temper, her favorite pupil, for I was orderly and industrious in the school room and never failed to have my lesson.

So it transpired that when the short school term ended, I was to go every Saturday to Miss Dillon's home and recite certain lessons. These were among the happiest days of my life. She was a woman of taste and an admirable cook, and there were flowers, and such a dinner as I never dreamed of till I went there. Then, when the lessons were over, she used to tell me stories made up of the leading historical events of the world. In this way, at the end of two years, I had quite a knowledge of history, was well advanced in other studies and had acquired a taste for learning and was determined to get an education.

Miss Dillon believed that Knute Nelson, the virile young Norwegian, with the blood of lusty Vikings in his veins, would become a great man if rightly inspired and developed, and she did her best to inspire him and fire his ambition. She told him that if he worked hard and followed the path of right and honor, he would achieve greatness. He could never be president, having been born outside of the United States, but he might be a congressman, governor or United States senator, and she predicted that some day he would occupy those high positions.

"It was with feeling," wrote Mrs. Wakeman, "that Senator Nelson said, although she was an aged woman when she died, and he had reason to be gratified that she had lived to see a part of her prediction fulfilled, it would have given him the keenest satisfaction if she could have lived until her prophecy had been wholly verified. After her death, Miss Dillon's brother sent Senator Nelson a big parcel which, when opened, proved to be newspaper clippings concerning him, which she had been for years collecting."

Miss Dillon died of tuberculosis in Walworth county in 1885 or 1886. She therefore lived to see him go to

congress in 1883, but died years before his elevation to the governorship of Minnesota and the United States senate. She exchanged letters with her former pupil at various times from 1853, when he left La Grange, until her death, and at his invitation, paid him a visit at his Alexandria home after his election to congress. He also visited her while on his way to Washington, and sent her many public documents, books and other gifts.

None took a livelier interest than Mary Dillon in the outcome of the Kindred-Nelson congressional campaign of 1882.

"When your brother Syver was here, I received the news of our mutual friend, K. Nelson's, nomination for congress," she remarked in a letter to Bjorn Holland, dated October 15, 1882, "but at that time I had no idea that his nomination was so bitterly contested. Now I am glad to see that the leading journals of Minnesota sustain him and denounce Kindred. A few weeks from now will tell the tale, whether Kindred's money bags or Nelson's pluck will win. Yes, if Knute is spared, I am sure he will make his mark. He was always resolute, persevering and energetic. In fact, had the best characteristics of the Norse type."

At another time, referring to the many spankings she gave her turbulent pupil, Miss Dillon's keen Irish wit flashed forth in these words:

"If I had given Knute just one more good whipping, he would undoubtedly have become a perfect man."

Mr. Holland confirms what Senator Nelson said about his wildness and roguishness as a boy in Walworth county. "Knute was the worst boy in school to play tricks on his school mates, even in school hours, and got more spankings than any other pupil."

Mr. Holland gives a humorous account of the first Fourth of July celebration which Knute Nelson attended. It was at Whitewater in 1852.

> We boys, as well as the other immigrants, had no idea what the celebration signified, whether an elephant, giraffe or what not [he said]. We decided to solve the mystery, however, and started for Whitewater bright and early. Upon our arrival we found, to our

surprise, a vast crowd of people gathered about a stand, listening to patriotic speeches in commemoration of the Declaration of Independence, patriotic songs and music.

When the exercises were over, the people proceeded to a nearby grove to partake of a big dinner, which was served free to everybody. But we "newcomer" boys were too timid and bashful to draw near the tables. Our clothes were old and threadbare and our pants legs entirely too short. So, hungry as we were, we hung back. But soon an American lady took note of us and surmised what was amiss.

"Why don't you boys come to dinner?" she asked. "Dinner is free to all. Come along and I'll see that you get your fill."

We did not need a second invitation. We were exceedingly hungry after our long walk to town, and all did ample justice to the meal. On our way home, Knute broke out in his characteristic, jocular manner: "O, but that was a good dinner! The best I have ever eaten. Cakes, pies, chicken, doughnuts and that splendid lemonade! Yes, this meal I shall never forget."

To the very end of his days, Knute Nelson lived over in his memory the three years he spent in the old Skoponong settlement. They were happy years—fruitful years, on account of the teaching and influence of Mary Blackwell Dillon.

In a long letter to his friend Holland, written from Washington in February, 1920, he refers to an "old swimming hole," but is filled with sadness because the pioneers of the early fifties are no more.

"Some years ago I attended an old settlers' reunion at Palmyra and met some of the old settlers there," he wrote. "I drove over from Whitewater with a half-brother of mine (Henry), and on the way we stopped at your old farm. It seems to me, if I recall it right, that Martha Herre, one of our old school mates, then a widow, was living on the farm.

"At a distance back of the house, it seems to me, I could see the creek with the willows around it, where we used to go and swim. Now all the old settlers at Skoponong have passed away and the new ones are all strangers to me."

Chapter II

STUDENT AND TEACHER

As a boy and young man Knute Nelson changed his abiding place four times, moving westward and northward—principally westward, so that we may say he followed the course of empire and Horace Greeley's advice.

Each move was a fortunate one. His life in Chicago was, to be sure, fraught with danger, but there is no doubt he profited by his experiences in the rough young city, throbbing with life, typically American, the incarnation of the spirit of the west. The various odd jobs he did to pay for his board and lodging developed his resourcefulness. His experiences as a newsboy sharpened his wits, helped to make him a keen, alert, typical American, able to look out for himself in trying situations and emergencies. It meant something to be thrust right into the thick of things the way Knute Nelson was in Chicago, when he came as a green lad from the mountainside of Voss.

In the Skoponong settlement, he came under the influence of that noble woman, Mary Blackwell Dillon, and in the rich soil of his eager, receptive mind were planted the seeds of culture, ambition, high ideals.

In his third sphere of action, Dane county, Wisconsin, he was for several years an idolized student in one of the most helpful and inspiring little institutions of learning in the west; taught school among a hospitable and sympathetic people; heard and answered the call of the Great Emancipator to help save the Union; studied law under one of the great men of the state, and received his first lessons in the science of politics and statecraft where it was practiced by masters.

In Old Koshkonong

At La Grange, Ingeborg Johnson became the wife of a Norwegian immigrant, named Nels Tangen, or Nels

Nelson, and in 1853 the family located on a farm in the town of Deerfield, Dane county, Wisconsin, some twenty miles east of the state capital. Deerfield is a part of the famous Koshkonong settlement—the best known, best loved Norwegian colony in America. Koshkonong is a beautiful Indian name, given by the red men to one of their favorite fishing lakes and to a little river or creek that winds southward to Koshkonong lake. The plowshare turns to the sun a dark, rich loam in Koshkonong and the landscape is one of the loveliest in Wisconsin.

The settlement was founded late in the year 1839 by four daring pathfinders from Knute Nelson's native parish of Voss, and during the forties, the fifties and the sixties was the Mecca of thousands of pilgrims from Norway. As the settlement filled up, the younger Norwegians and some of the more restless older ones began moving into other localities farther west and north, there establishing new Norwegian colonies.

As a result, we find the sons and daughters of Koshkonong scattered over the northwest, all treasuring fond memories of beautiful Koshkonong prairie, of the hardwood groves, of the low round-headed hillocks capped with timber, the winding creek, turning old mill-wheels at Cambridge and Rockdale, and the lakes rivaling in beauty the tarns and fjords of the far-off mother country. Later in life Knute Nelson himself, at Alexandria, in St. Paul and in Washington, cherished these fond memories, and to the very last reserved in his heart a warm spot for "Old Koshkonong."

And Knute Nelson is not the only son of Koshkonong that has won fame. A goodly number of the foremost Norwegian-Americans have been nurtured on its historic soil. We will name just a few: Rasmus B. Anderson, author, scholar, former United States minister to Denmark; Andrew E. Lee and Charles N. Herreid, former governors of South Dakota; Professor Julius E. Olson of the University of Wisconsin.

Knute Nelson was a little over ten years old when he came with his parents to the town of Deerfield. The

new Nelson home was not far from Kroghville, which derived its name from a pioneer named Krogh, and about four miles to the southeast lay the tiny village of Cambridge. The present village of Deerfield, situated in the town of Deerfield, had not as yet come into existence; its predecessor, Old Deerfield, abandoned when the railroad came through from Milwaukee to Madison, lay two miles to the north.

The biggest man in the neighborhood, physically, intellectually and financially, was Gulleik Thompson, or Gulleik Saue, who has now been dead for a generation, but whose fame lives after him.

When gold was discovered in California, he joined a caravan of gold seekers and returned with a fortune. He acquired vast tracts of land, something like 2,000 acres of the most fertile soil in Koshkonong, besides several large farms in Minnesota. A part of his fortune—$300,000—was given to the University of Wisconsin as an endowment of the Scandinavian department.

He was exceedingly shrewd, resourceful, domineering, and ruled the neighborhood with an iron hand. Very few dared to cross him. One of the few was Knute Nelson, after he had attained his manhood. The Nelson farm and Gulleik's home lay only a mile or two apart and the school which Knute attended, after his arrival in Deerfield, was called the Thompson school, because it stood on Gulleik Thompson's land. But little is heard in Koshkonong about the future senator's school days until he entered Albion academy at the age of fifteen. The teachers were not of the Mary Dillon type and failed to interest or enthuse their pupils. That the boy was determined to continue his education is shown by the efforts he made to obtain a fifth reader.

"I hauled a cord of four-foot hard maple wood and traded it even up for that reader," Senator Nelson said with a satisfied chuckle while in one of his talkative, reminiscent moods late in life. He kept that reader to the end of his life. It was one of his most cherished possessions.

Entered Albion Academy

It was exceedingly fortunate for Knute Nelson that there was such an institution as Albion academy when he was a boy and that it was situated only a dozen miles or more from his Deerfield home. It was an ideal school for a boy of his character and antecedents and so destitute of means. The training, the encouragement, the inspiration he received in this pioneer institution was of inestimable value. Without it he could not have achieved what he did.

Albion academy is now only a memory, but it is a glorious memory that will long endure. Of all minor institutions that flourished several generations ago west of Lake Michigan, it is the most historic and in many ways the most noteworthy. It was situated in the quaint little village of Albion, three miles from a railroad, and in the midst of a beautiful stretch of country—in the southeast corner of Koshkonong. It was housed in three substantial brick buildings, severely simple in their architecture and surrounded by a charming campus.

Albion academy was founded in 1854 by the Northwestern Association of Seventh-Day Baptists, which also maintained a school at Milton, Wisconsin. Its history reminds one of the beginning of Harvard and Yale—a story of rare sacrifice and devotion. It was not a sectarian institution in a narrow sense, students of all denominations being welcome.

The principal founder and president of the board of trustees was Charles R. Head, physician, philanthropist, legislator.

"To him," says Mr. J. Q. Emery, an alumnus of the school, "more than to any other one person, those whose lives were broadened, strengthened and enriched by the privileges afforded them by Albion academy owe a debt of gratitude which can never be fully discharged. Of charming personality, gentle, genial, dignified and courteous in manner, habitually correct in speech, refined, sympathetic and charitable in thought, speech and action, perfect in poise, zealously devoted to liberal education, he was for forty years the model and ideal of gentle-

From top: Main Hall, Albion Academy; Mary Blackwell Dillon; Professor A. R. Cornwall.

manly and philanthropic manhood for a continuous stream of incoming and outgoing students with whom he came in contact. It is hardly exaggeration to say that his life was freely and lovingly offered as a living sacrifice to the welfare of that pioneer institution of learning."

A single example will suffice to illustrate his devotion. He had planned to build a more comfortable home for himself and family and had already hauled the lumber to his farm for that purpose, when word was brought that work on the new academy building had to be stopped for want of funds to buy lumber. Doctor Head did not hesitate. To him it seemed more important that the school should have a new home than that he himself should have a better dwelling, and he immediately turned his lumber over to the carpenters that were building the academy.

Doctor Head's Story of Nelson

Such was the man to whom Knute Nelson came in the fall of 1858 to learn whether it would be possible for a penniless boy to take a course in Albion academy. The author received the story from Doctor Head's own lips, more than twenty years ago:

> One morning I heard a rap on my door and when I opened it found a lad of about fifteen. I could tell at a glance that he was poor and that he was a Norwegian immigrant boy, for he wore the home-made, homespun clothes characteristic of such boys in those days. He had an open, eager face, with clear, penetrating blue eyes.
>
> "Is the president at home?" he asked.
>
> I explained to him that I was not the principal of the academy, but president of the board of trustees. What could I do for him? Oh, he wanted to know if it would be possible for him to enter the academy without any money.
>
> I asked him a number of questions, studying him carefully, and made up my mind that he was a very deserving boy, who simply had to be given a chance to obtain an education. It would be all wrong not to help such a boy. So I told him to come right along when school opened and he would be taken care of.

As Professor Cornwall First Saw Him

Professor A. R. Cornwall, the principal of the academy for some twenty years, including the years Knute

Nelson was a student there, told and retold the story of the boy's arrival at Albion a month or two after his visit to Doctor Head. He gave it in detail in a letter published in the Alexandria Post for December 4, 1874, after Knute Nelson's first election as state senator.

Sixteen years ago this coming December [runs the letter], a small boy entered my office just as night set in, and asked if he could attend school. On account of his small stature and boyish look, I thought it a wild notion of the lad's when he told me he had walked fourteen miles and must return the same night. It was cold and snowing and muddy. I sent him to a neighbor's to look for a room, thinking that would be all I should see of him.

In a few moments he returned and stated he could find none, and earnestly asked if he could not get a place in one of the "buildings." I showed him a room, empty and bare, and told him when to come back at the opening of the winter term—feeling certain that he would never return.

But on the day before the term opened I chanced to see an ox team just as it was leaving the village, driven by a boy. Knute had brought some logs for wood, driving the oxen fourteen miles, and was just turning to go the same long road back again with the team. It was then near night and cold.

His "landaulet" consisted of four wheels, sawed from the end of a log, and for axles he had poles; some planks were spiked to the axles with wooden pins. On this he had drawn two green logs for wood to be cut up as needed, and a chest which had come from over the sea, and one which, with good care, might last forever, or even without good care. The chest contained the provisions, books and household goods of the future senator.

When the bell rang to call the students the next morning, this same boy made the first entrance to the chapel—having walked back the fourteen miles. He told me at the outset that he had no money. He cut wood, built fires and took care of my horse, and in the spring worked in my garden to meet his bills—in which he was very particular to have "all up." When the larder was empty, he walked with his basket the same fourteen miles for a new supply. This he did every two weeks for the year, and I think much longer.

I soon heard his name called over by the young men as they passed to and fro from the society rooms, and found that he was soon among the foremost in forensic struggles. He moved steadily on in his classes and his teachers almost uniformly gave him "max" bills of standing.

The vehicle in which the future governor rode behind that faithful yoke of oxen, and which Professor Cornwall called a "landaulet," was a rather crude example of what the Norwegian pioneers called a "kubberulle"

(rolling blocks). They were very common, not only in Koshkonong, but in all of the old Norwegian settlements. As the clumsy vehicle moved along, it made an ungodly noise, creaking and groaning like a monster in agony.

Many a time did Senator Nelson indulge in a healthy chuckle as he thought of the picture he presented when he appeared at Albion as a new student. Every garment he had on was homespun as well as home-made.

Always Ready for Tilt

As intimated by Professor Cornwall, Knute Nelson was much smaller than the average boy of fifteen and also more boyish looking. Although modest and respectful toward his elders, and a model son to his mother, he was in some respects a genuine "roughneck," always up to mischief, roguish, full of fun and also full of fight. Indeed, he was ready to fight when the occasion seemed to demand it, even though his antagonist was much bigger than he and sure to get the best of the fistic argument. And he was as ready to give battle with his tongue as with his fists.

This the late H. B. Howe of Deerfield discovered to his sorrow soon after Knute came into the neighborhood. Mr. Howe was a year or two older than Knute and felt very cocky and important because he had learned a little English. When he first saw the little "newcomer kid" over at Kroghville (Kroghville, alas, has long since disappeared from the map), young Howe thought he had found a good chance to have some fun and at the same time show his superior attainments.

So he made some jeering remarks in English to the newcomer, but the results were far from what he expected. Knute fired back a volley of vigorous English slang and cuss words that completely dumbfounded young Howe and drove him from the field of battle a sadder and wiser Norwegian. Knute's training as a Chicago newsboy showed to fine advantage in this crisis, as it did in many others of greater importance.

The author's father, Halvor E. Odland, who was a

near neighbor of Knute Nelson's parents from 1857 to 1861, always remembered the young student's shrewd, witty remarks and independent, original ideas.

Thus he never tired of repeating this little anecdote:

"Knute, now that you are studying at the academy, tell me, are you planning to become a preacher?"

"Oh, no; I am not enough of a fox for that," came the surprising answer from the future political strategist.

Of course, in those days it was always taken for granted, when a young Norwegian went off to school, that he was preparing for a course in theology in order to follow in the footsteps of Preus, Stub, Otteson and the other worthy pioneer pastors.

Friendship of Cornwall and Nelson

A warm friendship sprang up between Knute Nelson and Professor A. R. Cornwall that lasted until the schoolmaster's death—a friendship that proved a factor in the senator's political success. The professor thought more of Nelson than of any of his other students, and in his chapel addresses, in after years, never failed to hold up before Albion students the example of the sturdy Norwegian boy, who, he said, like Lincoln, made himself out of the forests, split rails, chopped wood, and had about the same early struggles as the martyred president.

When Nelson was engaged in his deadly struggle with Charles F. Kindred, in the old Fifth Minnesota district, he sent for his old principal to campaign in his behalf. Professor Cornwall heeded the call, leaving his newly acquired homestead in the James river valley of Dakota, and for weeks made the rounds of village halls and country schoolhouses to counteract the many malicious and untruthful attacks on Nelson's Wisconsin record, which the Kindred partisans resorted to all over the district.

First, the eloquent professor described to his audiences Knute Nelson's arrival at Albion in his ox-drawn "kubberulle," with his books, his cooking utensils, his provisions, his wood and his immigrant chest. Next he told how he swept halls, rang the bell and built fires to

pay for his tuition; how faithfully he studied his lessons; how he founded a literary society and excelled in the debates; how he shouldered his musket and went to war before completing his course; how, after his discharge from the army, he came back to finish his studies; how he graduated with honors; how he studied law, was admitted to the bar and proved himself an able lawyer; how the people sent him to the Wisconsin legislature twice—"no bolting or buying ballots."

"His success in his law practice was such," fervently declaimed the professor, "that Judge Spooner, one of the most honored judges of Wisconsin, said of him: 'He is the ablest, clearest in presenting a case to the jury, of any lawyer who argued in my court.' And when, on account of failing health, the boy came to Minnesota, the judge said: 'I will give that young man just ten years to come back through Madison on his way to congress.' "

The effectiveness of this talk on the stump and when published in the St. Paul Pioneer Press and other friendly newspapers was apparent. It struck home among the rank and file as few campaign speeches ever did in Minnesota. It helped to create a Nelson vogue and a Nelson tradition.

Memorable Nelson-Cornwall Vacation

One of Professor Cornwall's best loved poems—and he was a lover of poetry—was "The Red River Voyager," which he read first while lying on a sick bed. On a fragment of newspaper left by the physician he chanced to see the poem and felt, as the poem says, that

> "Drearily blows the north wind
> From the land of ice and snow;
> The eyes that look are weary
> And heavy the hands that row."

The poem has a wonderful melody which haunts the reader and snatches of it haunted Professor Cornwall and filled him with a desire to visit the scenes so mysteriously described by the poet. This wish was gratified one summer in the seventies, when to Albion came a let-

ter from Knute Nelson, which said: "If you will come up to Alexandria, we will visit the Red River of the North." "We went," says the professor in an interesting contribution to the Academic Monthly, which attracted the attention of John Greenleaf Whittier, causing him to write Mr. Cornwall a brief letter of thanks.

We found Senator Nelson a man of means and influence. A cruise of four hundred to six hundred miles among the marvelous group of lakes in Northern Minnesota, Dakota and Manitoba was a rare opportunity. Seventeen times we crossed the mystic river. Some of the poem we could see as well as the river, and some of it we saw by faith. The

"Gusty leagues of plain"

were enough for both fancy and reality, but

"Belts of dusky pine land"

we had to imagine. Bishop Whipple informed us there was not a pine tree between Pembina and Lake Winnipeg; yet

"Out and in the river winding
The links of his long red chain,"

except that the water was of clay-white color, instead of red. Once we heard

"The clang of the wild geese,"

and the spirit of poetry arose in us, only to be lowered by being informed it was only the screams of Indian pappooses. The Indians took the poetry out of us, and we understand they have since taken it out of General Custer. An instinctive love of the wild was born in us, and a sight of the plains of the Province of Manitoba was realizing the dreams of earlier years. We did not hear the "Bells of Saint Boniface," but when the bishop told us that a young man, born and educated at the Roman Mission, was now a professor at Oxford, our anxiety to hear them was not a little increased. It was a painful reflection that the Mennonite mother, whose little girl fell overboard and was drowned, did not find as much poetry in the river as we did. . . . . .

Our steps must now be retraced. . . . When we were to cross the river for the last time, I discovered that it could be forded. We were several hundred miles from its source, and persuaded the guide to take us through the waters instead of over them. Seeing the weary raftsmen from the distant forests, we remembered how the poet had said:

"And thus upon life's Red River
Our hearts as oarsmen row."

It was sunset, and here we also found the Alchemist's secret,

"And when the Angel of Shadow
Rests his feet on wave and shore,
And our eyes grow dim with watching,
And our hearts faint at the oar,

"Happy is he who heareth
The signal of his release,
In the bells of the Holy City,
The chimes of eternal peace."

It was a memorable vacation for both Professor Cornwall and Senator Nelson. In this picture, drawn by the professor, we catch a most interesting glimpse of the romantic and human side of the Minnesota politician and statesman—a side observed and recognized only by his intimate friends, not being visible to the general public.

Professor Cornwall died in 1893, shortly after his appointment as a professor in the University of Minnesota, through the influence of Governor Nelson. He was a graduate of Union college, New York, where he also received his master's degree. He was a polished gentleman, a classical scholar, of fine, vigorous physique, always perfectly groomed, of unusual energy and enthusiasm, an eloquent speaker and an enthusiast in literature and nature study.

"These characteristics were so outstanding," wrote J. Q. Emery, "so impressed upon his students and friends, that if he had some frailties incident to a peculiarly emotional and nervous temperament, they were prone to overlook these faults."

Among the most cherished possessions of the Cornwall family is a letter written by Senator Nelson to Mrs. A. R. Cornwall immediately after her husband's death. It is a beautiful expression of sympathy, heartfelt and sincere, and gives the reader an insight into Knute Nelson's character. It was written from St. Paul, May 15, 1893, a few months after Mr. Nelson's inauguration as governor:

Dear Friend:—I have just received a letter from Frank Luse, informing me of the death of Prof. Cornwall and that his funeral

will occur at his home tomorrow. It is very sad news to me. * * * * May the good Lord give you strength to bear it.

No friend in all this broad world ever had a stronger hold in my heart and affections than Prof. Cornwall. I shall always cherish his memory with gratitude. But for his kindness, I would have grown up an utter ignoramus, with no education or training whatsoever. When he was here at my inaugural, it little occurred to me that that would be his last visit.

I had been planning to make his latter days a little more pleasant by trying to secure him a suitable place among the corps of instructors at our State University. I had already seen President Northrop and State Superintendent Kiehle, and both gentlemen had given me assurances that by the beginning of the next academic year, they would try and find a suitable office for the Professor. Something that would have been agreeable to him, and, besides, furnished him with a fair salary.

I am very sorry that I cannot attend the funeral. I did not get Luse's letter until about 12 o'clock today and would have scarcely time to reach your place in time for the funeral; but the worst part of all is that I shall be obliged to start tomorrow evening for Chicago, to attend to business at the World's Fair, that I cannot possibly avoid or escape. Soon as you get time, I shall be very glad to hear from you fully as to the Professor's last sickness, and if, at any time, I can be of any assistance or service to you, do not hesitate to call on me.

When I saw the Professor last, I felt as if I would die before he did. He looked so rugged and hearty, and as jovial as of old; and strange as it may be, that very day, when I ought to have been the happiest of the two, he was happy and I felt rather sad and gloomy. I felt as though I was entering upon an unknown journey and dreaded the long and dreary days to come, and it gave me hope and courage to find that he, in spite of vicissitudes and misfortunes, still felt as courageous, cheerful and hopeful as ever. Peace be to his remains.

I hope that in the near future, I may be able to pay you a visit. With deepest sympathy for you in your affliction, I am,

Yours very truly,

KNUTE NELSON.

FRIENDSHIP WITH DOCTOR AND MRS. HEAD

A sincere and lasting friendship also developed between Knute Nelson and Doctor Charles R. Head and between Mr. Nelson and Mrs. Head. An admirable and endearing trait in Senator Nelson was his steadfast loyalty to all who befriended him in his early struggles and the fondness with which he cherished their memory. Doctor Head lived to be a grand old man, preceding

the senator in death by only a few years. Mrs. Head lived to the advanced age of 94, passing away in 1925. The senator sent them greetings at Christmas and on anniversaries, public documents, which he thought might interest them, and presents. He also called on them a number of times after his removal to Minnesota.

The last time Mr. Nelson visited "Grandma" Head was only a few brief months before his passing. The wife of Mrs. Head's grand-nephew was present, and when the venerable lady addressed her as "Inger," the senator remarked: "So the Norwegian entered the American family. That is the way it goes."

One of "Grandma" Head's most cherished possessions, when she died, was a beautiful golden brooch, which the senator sent her from Washington, with the message: "From the Norwegian boy that used to read in your library and to whom you were so kind."

Courses at Albion Academy

At the time Knute Nelson was a student there, Albion academy offered a four years' course of study, leading to the degree of bachelor of philosophy (Ph.B.) for men, and laureate of philosophy (Ph.L.) for women. Though operating under the modest name of "Albion Academy and Teachers' Seminary," by the terms of its original charter, and under the name of "Albion Academy and Normal Institute," by the terms of its second charter, it was in reality of college rank, and at all times had very able teachers in its faculty.

The first principal was the Reverend Thomas R. Williams, Ph.D., who was educated at Alfred university, Brown university and Union Theological seminary, New York, and Princeton Theological seminary.

The administrations of Professors Williams and Cornwall, from 1854 to 1878, were the golden age in the history of the academy. During that period it had a large attendance, rivaling that of the state university and Beloit college, the foremost educational institutions in Wisconsin.

The courses of study were planned on modified college

models, adapted to students of mature age and robust health, who were industrious, studious and ambitious. These subjects were offered, with certain options: Latin, Greek, German, French, higher arithmetic, higher algebra, plane and solid geometry, trigonometry, word analysis, advanced grammar, rhetoric, reading, elocution, chemistry, physiology, elementary astronomy, physics, geology, botany, ornithology, United States history, English literature, general history, metaphysics and logic.

A very complete course, this, and whoever completed it conscientiously could rightly be called an educated person. It was supplemented by training in public speaking and debates, conducted by the literary societies, one of which was started by Knute Nelson.

The future statesman not only completed this course, but also did graduate work for a time, and his industry was extraordinary. Indeed, in this respect he was held up as a model for younger students to follow.

His activity in the literary societies was as marked as his thoroughness as a student. No doubt the words of Mary Dillon, "You cannot be president, having been born outside the United States, but you can be congressman, governor and senator," continued to ring in his ears, and he felt that training in debate and public speaking, offered by the societies, would be of inestimable value.

Knute Nelson came by his low tariff ideas early in life, for at Albion academy, before the Civil war, he was an ardent Democrat. He and W. C. Silverthorn, later a prominent lawyer and one time Democratic nominee for governor of Wisconsin, were the outstanding Jeffersonians and champions of free trade in the student body.

One morning in chapel, one of the professors read a statement from a daily paper of a political nature and followed the reading with a comment of his own, rather derogatory to the Democratic party.

Up sprang Knute Nelson and cried out: "I should like to debate that point with the worthy gentleman and professor!"

Whether the "worthy professor" accepted the chal-

lenge history does not record. The incident shows that young Nelson remained true to his newsboy training in Chicago; that, as he said about himself, he was "ready to fight at the drop of the hat" in more ways than one, and that he did not stand in great awe of the learned faculty.

"He always had a book," said an old resident of Albion, referring to the senator's days in the academy. "He had his book with him while he rang the bell as janitor and read from it as he pulled the rope."

"In old Albion academy," said J. Q. Emery in the memorial address for Senator Nelson which he delivered at the Koshkonong Lutheran assembly, July 18, 1923, "he gained and maintained a reputation as being a very industrious, talented and picturesque student. I deem it no exaggeration to state that he was a favorite alike of the faculty, the student body and the board of trustees, who unceasingly applauded his abilities and lavished upon him an affectionate laudation that invested the name and career of Knute Nelson with an enchanting halo."

The Academy's Famous Alumni

That Albion academy was an inspiring institution is proved by the unusual record made by its alumni. It is safe to say that no institution of its size, in the course of two or three decades, sent forth into the world so many young men and women that became distinguished.

The list includes political leaders, lawyers, educators, dentists, theologians, physicians, scientists, jurists, journalists and writers, soldiers, business men, publishers, inventors, agriculturists—at least seventy men and women who attained more than local prominence. Among them was the late Alva Adams, three times governor of Colorado, prominent in business and distinguished as an orator. He entered the academy a few years later than Mr. Nelson, and in the winter of 1864-65 the two young men were roommates.

Taught School Near Stoughton

It was almost eight years from the time Knute Nelson entered Albion academy that he completed his studies there. This was due to two breaks in his course, the first in the winter of 1860-61, when he taught a term of school; the second when he served as a soldier in the Union army, from May, 1861, to July, 1864.

It was the Melaas school, in the town of Pleasant Springs, Dane county, over which the nineteen-year-old pedagogue presided. Of course, it was a log schoolhouse, not unlike the one in which Mary Dillon wielded the rod so effectively at La Grange. It stood about a mile from the Western church, and not far from Stoughton. Nearby was a rather famous wayside inn, called the "Buckeye Tavern," conducted by a Yankee named Wright.

It was a jolly, friendly community, where the young schoolmaster made many warm friends and had a pleasant time. He boarded with Johannes Melaas, a Norwegian farmer, who had just completed a comfortable new house—a sightly dwelling for those days, so well built that it is still standing in good condition. It was deemed an honor among the Norwegian pioneers to house the schoolmaster, and Mr. and Mrs. Melaas were not unmindful of this when they took the young teacher in and watched with keen satisfaction the interest he took in their boy, Christian, who was one of the pupils in the school.

When the time came for Knute to settle for his board and lodging, Johannes consulted with his good wife and decided to charge him one dollar a week. Long years afterward, when Mr. and Mrs. Christian Melaas were guests of Senator and Mrs. Nelson at Alexandria, and "Knute" and "Chris" took in the Douglas county fair together, they had many good laughs over this, as the statesman told his neighbors the story.

The future statesman conducted spelling schools, declamatory contests and debates, being one of the most active teachers along those lines in that part of the

county. He attended few, if any dances, and had no sweetheart in the neighborhood.

Even in his youth it was easy to see that Knute Nelson was a man set apart from his fellow men [said Mr. Melaas in a recent interview]. His ability and force of character impressed all with whom he associated. He and I became warm friends and were much together. On Saturdays and Sundays we went skiing together over the hills of the neighborhood and had all sorts of fun. Knute was a jolly companion. Every once in a while he would stop and deliver short speeches, as if to an audience, on such subjects as slavery and the tariff.

He had a wonderful memory, not only as a youth, but in his old age. It happened more than once, late in his life, when he visited at Deerfield, that he would call me up by telephone and I would run over and see him. At these meetings he would always ply me with all sorts of questions about old friends. He had forgotten none of them and was keenly interested in what they were doing, where they were living and how they were faring in life. You know "Jim" Clancy of Stoughton prides himself on having a prodigious memory as to old times and old friends. Once he went with me over to Deerfield to see Senator Nelson, and you should have heard the two exchange reminiscences! But Knute got the better of Jim. Jim had to admit to me afterward that Senator Nelson had a better memory for boyhood incidents and friends than he.

The old log schoolhouse, where Knute Nelson held forth as teacher, was long since torn down, and so was the Buckeye tavern, but the old store, which was also used in part as a hotel, is still standing, though vacant for years.

When Nelson was a member of the Wisconsin assembly, and a member from Milwaukee introduced the perennial bill to move the state capital from Madison to Milwaukee, the young Norwegian legislator introduced an amendment, substituting Buckeye for Milwaukee. The good laugh, which the assemblymen enjoyed at the Milwaukee member's expense, helped to kill the bill.

Chapter III

CIVIL WAR SERVICE: THE AFTERMATH

Knute Nelson's service in the Union army is a romantic, a thrilling, a heroic chapter in the history of his life. Of nothing else in his great career was he so proud; nothing else gave him such intense satisfaction as he ruminated upon his past.

And it was fraught with highly important results. When his political enemies charged him with un-American tactics in the midst of bitter campaigns, his war record served as a protecting shield. And his comrades, all influential citizens in their respective communities, rallied to his support, almost without exception, proving a powerful factor in the outcome. In the foundation he laid for his future success, Knute Nelson's service as a soldier was one of the corner stones.

He did not wait to be drafted. Fort Sumter fell April 14, 1861. On the next day Lincoln issued his first call for volunteers, asking for 75,000 men for three months to suppress the "combination against the Union" which had been formed in the south. Already in May, 1861, Knute Nelson shouldered an old musket on the campus of Albion academy and, with eighteen other students, began drilling in preparation for the great struggle.

Military enthusiasm rose high in the sequestered village as the boys, nearly all under twenty years of age, marched and cross-marched over the beautiful campus. At the end of the month, Captain Lohmiller, who had organized a company of state militia, called the Black Hawk Rifles, at Fort Atkinson, sixteen miles away, came over with a band and a "few of his most respectable men in uniform" and persuaded the Albion students to enlist in his company.

We immediately started for Fort Atkinson [wrote Senator Nelson to General F. C. Ainsworth, December 12, 1911]. We remained

there about a month and then the company was sent to Camp Butler, Racine, to form a part of the Fourth Wisconsin Volunteer infantry, then being gathered at that point. We Albion boys found, after joining the company, that we had gotten into a hard crowd; the captain was an easy-going, beer-drinking German, who kept little track of his company or his men; the first and second lieutenants were bummers and toughs of the first water; Hummel was a German, Rohr an Irishman. When they were not drunk, they were continually swearing and God-damning the men. A large share of his men were of the same character, and we boys saw that we had gotten into the worst kind of a gang. What to do about it we didn't know.

Finally when the United States mustering officer came to Racine to muster the regiment into the federal service, and commenced to muster in the Black Hawk Rifles, we Albion boys stepped out of the ranks and refused to be mustered in with that company. The colonel of the regiment, the mustering officer and the other officers interested, talked rather bullying and threatened to put us in the guard house, etc., but we simply told them we wouldn't be mustered in with that company. We were perfectly willing to go into the service, and be mustered in then and there, if we could be put in some other company in the regiment.

The result of it was that our refusal to be mustered into the Black Hawk Rifles broke up that company and it was not mustered in. We nineteen boys were scattered around in other companies, some eleven or twelve of us going into the Ripon Rifles, a company gotten up at Ripon, Wisconsin. It afterwards became Company B of the Fourth Wisconsin, in which company I performed my army service.

Before enlisting, Knute Nelson had consulted his good mother at Deerfield, obtaining her consent and her blessing. She did not see him again for over three years, but heard from him now and then during his service, for whenever it was possible to write and mail a letter to his mother, the young soldier seldom failed to do so.

A rather humorous story was told about the fond mother when word came that Knute had been appointed corporal. She had only vague ideas as to military rank, but felt that a signal honor had been bestowed upon her beloved son. So she was proud and proudly told a neighbor the important news.

"I have forgotten what it is," she said in her broad native dialect—she spoke no other language—"but I know it is some sort of 'ral'."

Saw Lincoln in 1861

The Fourth Wisconsin left the home state July 5, 1861, and arrived at Baltimore July 22. For a time it did guard duty in the vicinity of that city and of Washington. It is an interesting and noteworthy circumstance that Knute Nelson served his country at the national capital in 1861 and in 1923.

While stationed along the Potomac, the young soldier saw Abraham Lincoln, who, as is well known, was in the habit of visiting the soldiers in their camps.

"As I recall it," writes J. A. O. Preus, former governor, in response to an inquiry from the author, "he saw him only once. I remember distinctly that he informed me that he served in Washington just about where the Washington monument stands at the present time, or a little closer to the Willard hotel, and also seven blocks down Pennsylvania avenue from the capitol and about two blocks to the left. In fact, he walked down there with me one Sunday morning and showed me the places where he was stationed."

We can easily imagine the impression made upon the plastic mind of the young Norwegian private by the great president as he towered above the soldiers, his head enclosed in that peculiar "stove pipe" hat. It was his love and veneration for the immortal Lincoln and the cause he represented that changed Knute Nelson from an ardent Democrat before the war to an equally ardent Republican after the war.

The Fourth Wisconsin entered the service as an infantry regiment, but in 1863 was ordered mounted and thenceforth, to the end of the war, was known as the Fourth Wisconsin cavalry. While in the infantry it was ordered to join Butler's expedition at Ship Island. There many of Knute Nelson's comrades found a soldier's grave in the sandy soil of that ocean solitude, where

> "No useless coffins enclosed their breasts,
> Nor in sheets nor in shrouds they wound them."

But the strong physique of the young Norwegian, long used to hardships and exposure, withstood the

miasma, as well as the strain of the marching and transportation.

Nelson's War Record

Nelson was present with the Fourth Wisconsin at the capture of Fort Jackson and St. Philip and at the taking of the city of New Orleans on April 30, 1862. In August of the same year, he took part in the Battle of Baton Rouge, and went with Sherman's first expedition up the Mississippi against Vicksburg. His regiment was under fire most of the time about Vicksburg, losing heavily. It was also in the thick of the fighting in both battles of Port Hudson, where it lost heavily. Other sharp engagements in which Nelson and his regiment participated were those at Camp Bisland, Franklin and Opelousa.

Knute Nelson witnessed the second Battle of Port Hudson, when it fell, but he did not take part in the fighting, for the excellent reason that he was a prisoner of the Confederates inside the city.

> Our forces [says he in a sketch of his war experiences published in Yule Tide] had surrounded and laid siege to that place (Port Hudson) in the last week of May, 1863. Port Hudson held out, and on June 14, 1863, the attempt to take the place by storm was made by our forces.
>
> Our regiment led one of the charging columns in advance as skirmishers. The charge was made early in the morning and failed. I had almost reached the Confederate breastworks when I was wounded, and afterwards, about dusk in the evening, was taken prisoner. . . . . I was picked up within four rods of the Confederate breastworks by three young rebels who had gone outside to hunt for food, haversacks, canteens and other necessities.
>
> In searching for these things they came upon me and three others of my companions in a group. One of these was killed, another, Jenkins, had been wounded in seven different places, and two of the wounds had almost separated his arm into three parts. His suffering during the long, hot day was intense. The third one of my companions was entirely unhurt.
>
> On coming up to us, the rebels accosted us quite civilly, and one of them said: "How are you all getting along, boys? We were rather too much for you, I reckon?" They then inquired how and where we were wounded and told us they would help us to get inside, saying: "Your men can't get to help you; you had better come in with us. We have good surgeons and everything you want. If you stay here, you will all die."

I objected and told them that I was not badly wounded, but that after dark I could slowly crawl back to our lines, where I would surely fare better than in theirs, and that as to Jenkins, he was so badly wounded he could only be brought in on a stretcher. Two of the rebels then came up to me and lifted me up, one supporting me under one arm, the other under the other arm, and between the two I hobbled on one foot inside the breastworks, from where, with other wounded, I was carried in a cart to a hospital in a ravine near the Mississippi river.

My unhurt companion had, during our parley, kept very still and posed as dead, or "played possum," as it were, but the third rebel got his eye on him, picked him up and marched him in. Poor Jenkins was left to perish on the battlefield between the two lines, for while the charge had failed, the siege still continued for many days.

With his usual modesty and reticence in talking about himself, the senator did not enlarge upon his own suffering on the day he fell. All day long, under the hot southern sun, he lay severely wounded in the thigh on the field of battle. The bullet that inflicted the wound remained in his body until his death. The wound he received and the sufferings he endured that day, and in the Confederate prison afterward, seriously impaired his health, which was never so good after the war as before, and probably shortened his life. To be sure, he lived over 80 years, which is considered a long life, but Knute Nelson came of a hardy race, among whom long tenure of life is the rule. Not a few of his forbears saw almost 100 years, as did his mother, who was ninety-six when the final summons came.

Lived on Mule Meat

The young soldier remained in the Confederate hospital until Port Hudson surrendered on July 9, 1863. The city capitulated because the news came that Vicksburg had surrendered, and because the Confederates were on the verge of starvation. With one other wounded Union prisoner and with a dozen or more injured Confederates, he was kept in a large tent in a ravine. During the last ten days there was nothing to eat except a little corn bread and mule meat, with sassafras tea, made from the roots that were dug out of the ground in the ravine.

When Port Hudson surrendered, Nelson escaped to the Union lines. In a memorandum dated September 6, 1919, he thus describes how it happened:

The colored men around knew who the northern people were, and knew who the southern people were. All those who were able, when they knew Port Hudson was to surrender, went up on a hill and witnessed it. I had a crutch and was unable to go. I finally beckoned to a colored man, and he followed me out into the brush. I then asked him if he could procure a horse for me. The next day he gave me a knowing look, and I followed him around to a ravine and there, sure enough, he had a fine horse and a Mexican saddle for me. The horse was a sorrel animal and a fine specimen.

In the southern army they had a different practice from what they had in the northern army. The officers owned their animals. The horse I got was the property of a chaplain. I never hated so much in my life to part with an animal as I did this one, for when the war was over I had no further use for it.

After his wound had healed, the young soldier rejoined his regiment, which had now become the Fourth Wisconsin cavalry, and which was chiefly engaged in guerilla service in Mississippi, Louisiana and Tennessee until the close of the war. It was mustered out in Texas in 1866. Mr. Nelson's health was poor, so when his term of enlistment expired he was honorably discharged and returned to his home in Wisconsin. This was in July, 1864.

Three Christmas Days in the Army

A few years before his death, Senator Nelson contributed to the Yule Tide a brief sketch of the three Christmas days he spent in the army as an enlisted man. It sheds interesting light on the life he led in the southland during the war and on the character of the soldier lad. The sentimental side of the picture is rather strikingly portrayed.

They were strange and unusual holidays for me [he wrote], not indeed like those at home, but not entirely unhappy. They have had a sobering effect on a wild, wayward, and enthusiastic boy.

The first Christmas we spent in Baltimore, at Patterson's park, in old leaky tents, with straw on the ground for beds, with a scarcity of fuel and money and with rather poor army rations.

It would have been a very dull and dreary Christmas day for us, if it had not been for the kindness of Mr. Leach, a strong Union

man, of Scotch descent, who resided a short distance from our camp and had often visited us. He invited our entire company to his home for a Christmas dinner.

He gave us a fine Christmas turkey dinner. After dinner his wife and daughters sang and played on the piano many fine national and patriotic songs. Some of our boys joined in the singing and we were all greatly cheered and enthused. It expelled the lingerings of homesickness, and turned our thoughts to our work of saving and preserving the Union.

To show our appreciation of the kindness of Mr. Leach, our company presented him and his family with a library edition of Burns' complete poetical works, and also a large, gilt-edged family album, in which we intended to have our autographs and pictures placed; but before we could accomplish this our regiment was suddenly ordered south, and we were compelled to leave a blank album.

The next Christmas was spent at Baton Rouge, the capital of Louisiana. It was a sad, dull and dragging day, only relieved by a very badly cooked dinner of goose, supplemented with army rations of the usual kind, with black coffee in large tin cans. To make it especially discouraging and disagreeable to me, I had been on picket duty the night before, was drowsy and sleepy, with a bad headache. A quart of the black coffee revived me and in part dispelled the headache.

The third Christmas was not quite so barren and lonesome as the preceding one, though inferior to the Baltimore Christmas in many respects. The breakfast was of the usual army kind, bread, fried salt pork, and an ample supply of black coffee, made of yellow Mississippi water.

At this time I was a corporal stationed as an orderly at regimental headquarters, and in consequence I was invited by the quartermaster to partake in a dinner which he gave to some of his friends at headquarters. We had roast goose and turkey, hot biscuits and butter, potatoes, cookies, sugar loaf cake and coffee with sugar and condensed milk. A most wonderful dinner for us soldier boys in those days! Some had liquor and cigars, but I neither tasted the liquor nor touched the cigars, and was all the better for it.

During the forenoon I was occupied in reading Macaulay's great essay on Warren Hastings, a wonderful intellectual treat, that seemed almost like a romance, glittering in thought and language, and to me a revelation, for I had never read anything by Macaulay before.

In the afternoon I visited my Albion schoolmates, Luce and Masters, comrades in arms. We were all apparently so happy that little was said about home and school days, incidents of our army experiences being the chief topic of conversation.

After a scant army supper, we took a stroll through town and then back to our tents to retire for rest and sleep. On the whole I can say that at least two of my Christmas days in the army were cheerful and happy ones. Of course, we were never free from a pining-for-home feeling, but somehow we never felt any fear or misgivings as to the future.

The reference to Macaulay's essay shows that the young soldier carried his studious habits with him even into the zone of war.

Was the "Little Corporal"

During the greater part of his military service Knute Nelson was a plain private in the ranks. His promotion to the grade of a corporal came in 1863, and it is stated that the records of his company show that he was discharged with the rank of sergeant. Be that as it may, he never claimed or assumed this rank, but seemed to take a humorous pride and delight in the title of "Corporal Nelson" or the "Little Corporal." As former Lieutenant Governor L. L. Collins was Minnesota's "Little Corporal" in the World war, politically speaking, so Knute Nelson was the "Little Corporal" of the Civil war.

There has been some speculation as to why Mr. Nelson did not rise to a higher rank in the army in view of his unusual ability and courage. It is stated by some of his friends, who may know what they are talking about, that he did not desire the rank of a commissioned officer —had no fancy for shoulder straps and dangling scabbards, and felt he could render better service in the ranks. That may be true. But whatever his ambition and desires, the reason for his failure to rise to a higher rank is probably found in the fact that he was considerably younger than the average soldier and looked much younger than his years. He was described by some of his comrades as a "mere boy," and mere boys are not, very often, made officers in a deadly war.

Knute Nelson is by no means the only soldier of the Civil war, later prominent in public life or business pursuits, who did not rise from the ranks in the army.

Favoritism and luck or chance are responsible for many promotions in the army, the same as in civil life, in business and in commerce.

Incident at Baton Rouge

As already stated, Knute Nelson's war record was an element of strength in his political career. Acts of bravery that he had performed, remembered by his comrades, came to light and received wide publicity. Thus, in the most crucial contest of his entire career, the Kindred-Nelson congressional campaign of 1882, the following incident was narrated by S. J. Beebe, St. Olaf, Otter Tail county:

> I feel it to be my duty to send a reminiscence of war times, inasmuch as it bears upon the character of Mr. Nelson. I saw the incident myself exactly as I relate it. In the winter of 1863, the Fourth Wisconsin cavalry was stationed at Baton Rouge, Louisiana. I was a member of company G and Knute Nelson was a member of company B, and by his friendly, manly and fearless bearing had won the good feeling of all and was a particular favorite of both officers and soldiers.
>
> One evening at "Water Call," as I was going to the river to water my horse, I saw a soldier of company E snatch a paper from a newsboy and gallop towards the camp. Knute happened to be passing close by and, hastily paying the boy for the paper, started off on a gallop, overtook the company E man and demanded the paper as his property. Nelson was hardly more than a boy then, and I expected that he would get into trouble, as the other was a very rough fellow, but Nelson's fearless manner so cowed him that he gave up the paper and submitted to a lecture that ought to have made him a wiser and better man.
>
> This incident impressed me strongly at the time as showing what the Nelson boy was made of, and it would take a great deal to make me believe that Knute Nelson would stoop to trickery or double dealing. Let me say just here that I have not seen Mr. Nelson since the war and have no interest in his election further than one should feel in seeing honest men elected to our national congress.

Mr. Beebe sent his letter to the Fergus Falls Journal, which supported Mr. Nelson, and other friendly papers also gave it publicity. The effect cannot be doubted.

Act of Bravery Cited

Again, in January, 1895, while the memorable Washburn-Nelson senatorial contest was raging fiercely, with charges of treachery and double-dealing flying thick and fast, one of Governor Nelson's comrades came forward with a story of the "Little Corporal's" bravery at the

front, which could not fail to strike responsive chords. The story was telegraphed from Albert Lea to the Pioneer Press:

> During one of the most heated battles of the late rebellion, James G. Hamlin, now of Blue Earth city, saw the commanding officer shot from his horse and rushed from his secure place to rescue the supposed fatally injured man. He required assistance and called to a soldier to help him, but he declined to leave his comfortable place behind a tree to help remove his wounded officer. He called to a second private, a mere boy, and he at once responded. The officer was taken to a place of safety and recovered. The mere boy who endangered his own life by going where rebel bullets flew thick and fast, to recover the body of a wounded officer, is now governor of Minnesota, being none other than Knute Nelson.

And when Governor Nelson's name was presented to the Republican caucus, as a candidate for United States senator, the first seconding speech was delivered by a comrade, J. M. Underwood, from Senator Washburn's own city of Minneapolis—and a Yankee at that! (It was a pretty serious matter for a Minneapolis Yankee to come out openly and boldly for the "Little Norwegian," as J. M. Underwood did in that eventful Republican caucus.)

An interesting circumstance, connected with Nelson's sojourn at Port Hudson, is that Edward Douglas White, afterward a United States senator from Louisiana and chief justice of the supreme court of the United States—one of the great men of the nation and, like Knute Nelson, of more than national renown—was also at Port Hudson, inside the city, from June 14 to July 9, 1863. Justice White was there as a junior officer in the Confederate army; Senator Nelson as a federal prisoner of war. This fact was ascertained almost sixty years later, when the two men, then gray with years, exchanged war reminiscences at a White House dinner party. The discovery awakened the liveliest interest, President Wilson being among those who took special notice of it.

Pathetic Incident at Reunion

A touching incident occurred at Ripon, Wisconsin, in September, 1897, when Senator Nelson attended a

reunion of his old regiment. Mrs. Jenkins, the aged mother of Jenkins, Nelson's young comrade, who suffered with him and died outside the Confederate breastworks at Port Hudson, came to see the distinguished veteran in the hope of learning the particulars of her son's sad fate. She did not know his fate before—all she knew was that he had never returned, and that no word had ever come to her from him or about him.

As the senator told the mother the sad story—how her son had lain all day long, under the burning sun, with seven wounds in his body and then, in the dusk, was left to die alone—the tears streamed down her cheeks and the senator's voice trembled with feeling.

Southerners Loved Nelson

Although he felt very strongly against slavery, Senator Nelson did not cherish any hatred against the soldiers of the Confederacy, and after the war numbered some of them among his warmest friends. It is interesting to note that almost fifty years after his imprisonment at Port Hudson he got into communication with the Confederate soldier that he had most to do with while a war prisoner. The two had become good friends, but after their separation, when Port Hudson fell, lost track of each other. In 1911, however, a mutual friend, who called on Nelson in Washington, made known to him the whereabouts and the real name of his former associate in the southern prison, and the senator wrote him a long letter. His name was D. B. Arnold and he was a prominent citizen of Mississippi. Nelson had known him at Port Hudson by a nickname.

When, on March 9, 1924, the senate of the United States paid tribute to the memory of Knute Nelson, three of the orations were delivered by senators from the south. They spoke as representatives of the south—as sons of men that had fought for the Lost Cause—and they all spoke as men that loved the dead soldier who had fought so valiantly to defeat that cause. They loved him for his charity and his broad sympathies, which embraced the south as well as the north.

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In the course of his address, Senator Ransdell of Louisiana said:

The last preceding member of this body who was a soldier in that war, who has since been called to his last reward, was Senator Bankhead of Alabama. He and the late Senator Nelson were very intimate friends. Many of you doubtless recall that wonderful parade in this city in honor of the selective service men, when on the 4th of September, 1917, the members of congress marched down Pennsylvania avenue in full strength, and hundreds of thousands of people thronged the sidewalks to witness the inspiring spectacle. On that occasion John Bankhead and Knute Nelson—one the former Confederate, the other the former Union soldier—marched side by side as friends, though former opponents in war.

When, later on March 1, 1920, Senator Bankhead was called to his eternal reward, his old colleague, Senator Nelson, then in his 77th year, went all the way from here to Alabama to attend the funeral of his friend and associate of many years. It was a beautiful tribute for Nelson to pay to Bankhead, and I am sure that if Bankhead were here today, his voice would tremble with emotion in speaking of his old friend Nelson. Thank God, all the wounds of that cruel struggle have vanished long, long ago.

"By the flow of the inland river,
Whence the fleets of iron have fled,
Where the blades of the grave-grass quiver,
Asleep are the ranks of the dead;
Under the sod and the dew,
Waiting the judgment day;
Under the one, the Blue;
Under the other, the Gray."

Chapter IV

WISCONSIN LAWYER AND LEGISLATOR

Very few of the young men who were students in colleges or academies when the Civil war began and left their studies to fight on southern battlefields returned to those institutions to complete their courses. That Knute Nelson resumed his studies at Albion in the fall of 1864, proves his stability and steadfastness of purpose. He entered the academy with the intention of taking a full course, and he did not allow even such an experience as three years in a fierce war to unsettle him or change his plans.

He completed the regular four years' course for men, receiving his degree of Ph.B., and also pursued advanced studies and taught some of the beginning classes. He was a full-grown man on his return from the south and his face was bearded. Needless to say, he was regarded by all the younger students with no little respect and awe, and the faculty and the trustees treated him with unusual consideration.

The young man signalized his return by delivering in the academy hall a rather extended speech, urging the re-election of Abraham Lincoln—an address which, according to Professor A. R. Cornwall, "was called the most lucid and candid speech ever given there by a politician, notwithstanding nearly all of the governors of the state had spoken there." That speech was one of the first, if not the first, campaign addresses Knute Nelson ever delivered.

It is worthy of note that Professor Cornwall describes this effort as "lucid" and "candid." From this it appears that clearness of statement, for which Senator Nelson was noted, characterized his public speaking at the very outset. And, likewise, there was that quality of sincerity which impressed all who heard him.

During his military service the future senator care-

fully saved his modest allowance and sent it home to his mother. She kept it for him, so that when he returned home he was able to resume his studies without resort to such drastic measures as were necessary when he first entered Albion academy.

Studied Law With Senator Vilas

That Knute Nelson had mapped out for himself a political career before his graduation from the academy is very evident from the zest with which he entered the forensic struggles at Albion and his fondness for political discussion. And being a close student of history, he knew that, with few exceptions, political leaders are men trained in the law. So it was perfectly natural that, upon leaving Albion, he set about preparing for admission to the bar. There were no law schools in Wisconsin at that time. Permission to practice usually was granted after a year or two of "reading" in a lawyer's office; only the sons of wealth went east to law schools.

Knute Nelson was far better equipped for the study of law than most of the men that turned to the legal profession sixty years ago. He had taken a short, but complete general college course, had read diligently, had taught school, had been active in debate, had mastered the art of public speaking, had learned to know life in the severe school of experience.

How it came that he read law in the office of William F. Vilas of Madison, we have been unable to learn. Presumably it was through the agency of mutual friends. Vilas was then a young man, not much older than Nelson. He came from a wealthy and aristocratic family, had been educated at the University of Wisconsin and the Albany College of Law, New York, and was rightly esteemed one of the most brilliant young men of the state. In his maturer years he looked, spoke and bore himself like an eminent statesman or English lord; the grandeur of his presence and his manner attracted attention everywhere. As a speaker, when stirred by a great cause or a great occasion, he was powerful, rivalling the foremost orators of the land. Being a Democrat in a

normally Republican state, his public career was of rather short duration, consisting of a term in the Wisconsin assembly, four years in Cleveland's first cabinet, and one term in the United States senate. For two years, from 1895 to 1897, Vilas and Nelson, teacher and pupil, served together in the upper branch of congress.

With Vilas, the young Norwegian read law the better part of two years, being admitted to practice by Judge Philip L. Spooner in the fall of 1867. Judge Spooner presided over the circuit court at Madison, and from the time Mr. Nelson came to the capital city until his departure for Minnesota was one of the most helpful, most valued of all his friends. He was a great jurist as well as a noble man.

Both Vilas and Judge Spooner took a keen interest in Knute Nelson. His association with such men could not be other than helpful, and he never forgot the services they rendered him. It must have afforded him keen satisfaction that both lived to see him "make good" in a large way. If we may believe the campaign talk of Professor A. R. Cornwall, Judge Spooner ranked the young Norwegian lawyer very high in point of both character and ability, and predicted for him a brilliant future. His son, John C. Spooner, who became one of the foremost members of the United States senate, was also a friend of Nelson's. The two young men, of equal age, seriously thought of forming a law partnership at Madison after their admission to the bar.

They were thrown much together in after years. When Spooner went to Washington to serve his first senate term, he found Nelson there as congressman. From 1897 to 1906 they were colleagues in the senate. In the campaign of 1892 Nelson was the Republican nominee for governor of Minnesota and Spooner the same party's candidate for governor of Wisconsin. To help each other, Nelson crossed the state line into Wisconsin to urge the election of Spooner; Spooner came into Minnesota to speak for his own and his noble father's friend.

Spooner was defeated, but added new luster to his

name when the Wisconsin legislature returned him to the upper branch of congress. There was intense rivalry and antagonism between Spooner and LaFollette, so when that master spirit conquered all opposition as governor and went to Washington as junior senator, Spooner resigned his seat and became a corporation counsel in New York, retiring from politics to amass a competence for his declining years.

Nelson had no relations at Madison with LaFollette, who was twelve years younger, and remained on his mother's farm west of the capital until 1874. He, with Vilas and Spooner, formed a trinity of political stars of the first magnitude and helped to spread the fame of Wisconsin's capital as the home of culture and brilliant men. The paths of Nelson and LaFollette crossed in after years, as we shall see.

Knute Nelson's Marriage

The year 1867 was an eventful one in the life of Knute Nelson. In that year he was admitted to the bar, opened a law office at Madison, was elected to his first political office and was married to Miss Nicholina Jacobson of the town of Christiana, Dane county, Wisconsin.

Like himself, Knute Nelson's bride was a Norwegian immigrant of humble birth. Her parents belonged to the peasant class, or "bonder," in East Toten, where she was born on a farm October 3, 1846. She, too, the same as Mr. Nelson, was six years old when her parents emigrated to America, settling in the town of Christiana. This adjoins the town of Deerfield on the south and at one time had the reputation of being the richest agricultural community in America, producing more tobacco than any other township.

Miss Jacobson and Mr. Nelson had known each other for many years before their marriage—been "sweethearts" no doubt before he went to war. She was a good, sensible, talented woman, never afraid to work. She had no desire for "high society," frills or furbelows. The two traveled life's common way with mutual affection, esteem and understanding.

Because of its failure to take an unequivocal stand against slavery as an institution, Senator Nelson had turned against the Norwegian Evangelical Lutheran Church of America and was not a member of a Norwegian congregation or of any other congregation in 1867, when he and his bride decided to marry. Hence they did not wish to have a pastor perform the marriage ceremony. Instead they went to a popular country "squire" of the town of Deerfield, who tied the "nuptial knot" with becoming dignity. It was late in the autumn and a heavy coat of snow covered the ground. The young bride and groom drove up to the squire's home in a cutter. When the ceremony had been performed and the groom turned the horse about in the yard to go back home, the cutter tipped over, spilling the bride into the snow. This untoward accident caused the squire no little merriment, and after Mr. Nelson had risen to prominence, he enjoyed the humor of it still more. It became one of his favorite stories.

In a Norwegian pioneer community like Koshkonong it was customary for all the young fellows of the neighborhood to share in nuptial festivities whether invited or not. Although Knute and Nicholina thought they had succeeded in getting married so quietly that the community had not discovered the happy and important event, news of it soon got out, and one night the youngsters came to the Nelson home in Deerfield with "tinkling brass and cymbals," first to celebrate in noisy fashion in the yard, then to eat, drink and be merry in the house. It was to be a genuine old-fashioned charivari.

When the noise had died down, Knute opened the door, quietly told his self-invited guests that he had nothing to offer in the way of "strong drink," but if they would come in, Nicholina would be glad to serve bread and butter, cake and coffee.

This announcement did not "sound good" to the merry-makers and they were at first disposed to be angry and rough, but Knute spoke to them so kindly and tactfully that they forgave him. They partook freely of the good bread, cake and coffee, and departed in excel-

lent humor, with best wishes for a "happy wedded life." Those who believed in temperance thought very well of Knute for his refusal to treat the boys to liquor. They said it showed courage and principle.

While the young lawyer practiced his profession at Madison and served in the assembly, Mrs. Nelson lived on the Deerfield farm, while he boarded with a Norwegian couple, Mr. and Mrs. Gilbert Winden. But in the fall of 1869, when he opened an office in Cambridge, he and the family had a house of their own in the little village. Three children were born to them while they lived in Dane county, two daughters and a son. One of the daughters died in infancy. Three other daughters were born at Alexandria, but all died in an epidemic of diphtheria in 1877. The son, Henry K. Nelson, died in 1908 of tuberculosis, which he had contracted while living on the Pacific coast. The eldest daughter is the only member of the family that survives.

Entered Politics

In the Wisconsin State Journal for October 8, 1867, appeared the following article:

> The Republican convention of the Northeast Assembly district met pursuant to call at Token Creek, Saturday, October 5, 1867, and was called to order by T. R. Tierney. William H. Miller was elected chairman, John Gibbons of Sun Prairie, secretary. Committee on credentials was T. R. Tierney, A. Wicks and W. H. Chandler.
>
> W. H. Chandler moved to go into an informal ballot for assemblyman. Carried. The result of the informal ballot was as follows: George Weeks, 18; Knute Nelson, 13; Isaac Mann, 6; W. M. Reeves, 5; W. H. Chandler, 1; blank, 1.
>
> First formal ballot—Weeks, 22; Nelson, 15; Mann, 4; Reeves, 3; J. T. Clark, 1.
>
> Second formal ballot— Nelson, 23; Weeks, 21; Chandler, 1.
>
> Moved by Colonel Hancock, that Knute Nelson be made the unanimous choice of the convention. Carried.
>
> W. H. Miller, chairman, John Gibbons, secretary.

This little article, written in exactly the same style as thousands, if not millions, of "reports" by convention chairmen and secretaries throughout the country, must be considered an interesting as well as important historical document, for it records the entrance into poli-

tics of one of the outstanding figures in the political history of the west.

The secretary of the Token Creek convention was a little slow in sending in his report, or the editor of the State Journal held it back for a day, for it was preceded on October 7, 1867, by an editorial commending the choice of the convention and predicting his election. "Mr. Nelson," says the editor, "is a man of good ability and every way qualified to make an efficient member of the legislature. He is a Norwegian by birth and as the district has a large number of his countrymen in it they will give Mr. Nelson a cordial support, which he will also receive from all other Republicans in the district. He will doubtless be elected by a large majority."

This was the first editorial "indorsement" given Knute Nelson as a candidate for office by a staunch Republican newspaper. It was, presumably, written by David Atwood, a worthy type of the strong, high-minded editors that helped to build up the west in the middle of the nineteenth century, that fought the slave-power with uncompromising zeal, first as Whigs, then as Republicans, and denounced the Democrats as if they belonged to the devil.

This editorial is typical of the hundreds of friendly boosts of Knute Nelson that were to follow in his subsequent career in Minnesota; it praised his ability and "qualifications" for the office he sought, and held that he would prove a strong candidate by virtue of his nationality. From 1872 to 1900 the daily and weekly press of Minnesota printed thousands of editorials of a like tenor. It was only after Knute Nelson had become a national figure, an American statesman in the broad sense of the term, that the editors and other party workers stopped prating about his Norwegian birth as a political factor.

Story of the Balky Horse

According to his own testimony, Senator Nelson was a very unknowing, unsophisticated novice at the political game when he entered the race for assemblyman in the second Dane county district. When his warm personal

friend, Mr. Spencer, assistant secretary of state, proposed that he try for the Republican nomination, he replied that he did not know how to go about it. Mr. Spencer, who was very influential in Dane county politics, assured him that all he would need to do was to secure a friendly delegation from the town of Deerfield —Spencer would do the rest. To get Deerfield was easy, as most of its people were his friends. But the convention itself proved by no means a one-sided affair.

The Nelson family had no horse or buggy at this particular time, so the young candidate borrowed an old nag and buggy from a neighbor, and drove across country to Token Creek, a little hamlet, now merely a name. When the balloting began, the Deerfield candidate felt sure he was beaten, and stole from the convention hall unobserved, to make for home. He would not be present to face his successful rival or the humiliation of defeat.

He hurried to the barn where he had put up his horse, hitched him up and said, "Geddap." But the horse would not "geddap"—he was balky. He was satisfied where he was for the time being. Why should he leave so soon?

Meanwhile the second formal ballot had been taken, Nelson had won, and along came a messenger with a demand for a speech of acceptance.

"Well," chuckled the senator, in telling the story years afterward, "while I didn't like to make a speech under the circumstances, I concluded I had better give the horse plenty of time to get started and went back to the hall."

In the Wisconsin Assembly

The nomination at Token Creek was equivalent to an election in that strong Republican district, and on January 8, 1868, Knute Nelson took his seat in the first legislative body of which he was a member. He was a little under twenty-five years of age, the youngest man on the floor, with the exception of John A. Smith of Walworth county, a lawyer, who was a few months younger.

Andrew Johnson, the most unpopular president in the

history of the United States, was then at the head of the national government; Lucius Fairchild, a distinguished one-armed veteran of the great war, was governor; John C. Spooner, who later defeated him for United States senator, was his private secretary; A. M. Thomson, later a political historian, was speaker. Among Nelson's colleagues were W. C. Silverthorn of Wausau, an Albion academy classmate, and R. A. Wilkinson, now a resident of Lake Elmo, Minnesota, and a member of the Minnesota legislature.

In the session of 1869 his colleagues included Thad C. Pound of Chippewa Falls, later lieutenant governor; H. D. Barron, speaker in 1866 and again in 1872; A. J. Turner, local historian, father of Frederick Jackson Turner, Harvard professor and historian; John Adams, father of Governor Alva Adams, Nelson's fellow student at Albion; Charles D. Parker, later lieutenant governor, who died recently at the age of ninety-eight.

In the session of 1868, Assemblyman Nelson was made chairman of the committee on enrolled bills, the duty of which was to see that all bills were properly drawn. This chairmanship meant lots of work, with many committee reports. The young assemblyman signed all of these reports "K. Nelson," recalling Lincoln's signature of "A. Lincoln." He continued to sign his name thus for a number of years, changing to "Knute Nelson" during his second session in the Minnesota state senate.

First Act as Legislator

On January 14, 1868, Assemblyman Nelson introduced joint resolution, No. 4, which provided:

> Resolved by the assembly, the senate concurring, that the superintendent of public property be directed to furnish for the use of the legislature 4,000 copies of the governor's message in the German language, 2,000 copies in the Norwegian language and 1,000 copies in the Welsh language, such messages to be in pamphlet form with paper covers, and stitched.
>
> Resolved further, that the price to be paid for said pamphlets shall not exceed 8 cents per copy for the messages in the German language, 10 cents in the Norwegian language, and 14 cents in the

Welsh language, which sums when paid shall be payment in full for translating the messages, printing, covering and stitching the same.

That was the first measure which Knute Nelson submitted to a lawmaking body in his career as a legislator —a career that spanned a period of fifty-six years, one of the longest in American history, and one of the most varied. Hence, like the State Journal article already quoted, it is of historic importance.

It is obvious that the young assemblyman took his first legislative offspring very seriously. Observe what pains he took to be definite, specific; how careful to limit the cost. No loop-holes there; no chance for the fellows that got the job of translating, printing, stitching and binding his excellency's message to slip one over on the state in the way of petty graft.

It is a naive, harmless looking little measure, but its reception was stormy. In the assembly sat Patrick Walsh of Milwaukee. Why should the sons of Old Erin be slapped in the face by that young Norwegian upstart from Deerfield? Pat got busy at once and the very next day introduced a resolution providing for 5,000 copies of the message in Irish!

Meanwhile the Nelson resolution was adopted by a vote of 46 to 42—a close shave—and referred to the committee on printing, which reported a substitute providing for 1,000 messages in English, 3,000 in German, 2,000 in Norwegian, 2,000 in Welsh, 1,000 in French —the Irish slighted again! Obviously the committee was pro-British. The next day it tried to kill Pat's resolution by reporting it out for indefinite postponement, but Pat was a tactician as well as fighter and staved off defeat by cutting the number to 1,000 and having the resolution referred to the committee on federal relations. To Knute's credit be it said, he voted with Pat in this crisis.

"I remember we had a lot of fun about those bills," said one of the members fifty-eight years afterward. "Whether any of them went through the senate I don't remember."

An Active Member

The session lasted until March 6, less than two months. Mr. Nelson was one of the most active members right from the start, and though very young, was not without influence. He spoke often, proving an effective debater. In the course of the session he introduced altogether a half dozen bills, none of much importance. Two of them became laws.

He showed his interest in the Norwegian-American press by introducing a resolution giving to Professor Svein Nillson, correspondent of Faedrelandet (The Fatherland), La Crosse, the same rights and privileges in the legislature (including the free use of stamps and stationery) as correspondents of the English dailies. Professor Nillson was then writing a series of sketches of the first Norwegian settlements in America that have been invaluable to all later writers on the Norse migration to America and the life of the early Norwegian pioneers.

Accepted Challenge to Fight

The young descendant of Vikings showed his remarkable fighting qualities within a few weeks after taking his seat. A member from the western part of the state, whose name need not be disclosed, introduced a bill which, in the opinion of Assemblyman Nelson, contained a "woodchuck." When it came before the assembly, he denounced it vigorously, using language which ruffled the temper of its author. This member was of large physique and less good-natured than large men usually are. When the assembly took a recess, he accosted Mr. Nelson, saying that if he would follow him into the hall, he would "make mince meat" of him.

"Go ahead," cried Knute, the Viking. "I'll be there."

I was afraid that Nelson was going to get badly beat up [said one of Nelson's colleagues in a recent interview] and followed him into the hall to see that he got a square deal and to help save him from too much punishment, if necessary.

But a strange thing happened. Nelson walked right up to the big fellow and gave him the very worst calling down I have ever heard. His language wouldn't look good in print, I can assure you,

but it was very clear, correct and to the point—about the best I ever heard in that respect. He dared the other fellow to start the fight. If he did, he would get a licking he would never forget.

The upshot of it was that the big fellow was completely cowed and walked off without making a move to fight and without saying a word. He had completely wilted.

When he had slunk away, Senator Price, another small fellow, not bigger than Nelson, who witnessed the clash, walked up and wrung Nelson's hand, saying it was the finest thing he had ever seen.

Knute Nelson showed in this instance not only the courage of the Vikings, but also the value in certain emergencies of his newsboy training in Chicago.

Refused to Take Orders

In his autobiography, Robert M. LaFollette tells how, at the outset of his political career, while a candidate for district attorney of Dane county, he incurred the wrath of E. W. Keyes, the most famous political boss in the history of Wisconsin. That was in 1880, after Boss Keyes' power had shrunk to a "little measure" in Dane county.

Mr. Keyes was also the first political boss with whom Knute Nelson collided. Keyes was not a member of the Wisconsin assembly or senate in 1867, but he was chairman of the Republican state central committee and was at the height of his power. Judge Keyes, as he was also called, believed in building up a powerful Republican organization in Wisconsin and he was not over-scrupulous as to the means employed. The end was sufficient justification. At that time some of the big lumbering interests were not as zealous for the party as they might be. Mr. Keyes cultivated their good will by using his influence as state chairman in behalf of certain legislation in which they were interested.

Knute Nelson scanned these bills very carefully, and some of them were of such a character that he refused to support them, notwithstanding the orders from headquarters—Boss Keyes' room in the Madison postoffice. It is said by one of Senator Nelson's few surviving colleagues in the Wisconsin assembly that Mr. Keyes became

very angry at the disobedient young lawmaker and threatened to defeat him for re-election.

Whether Judge Keyes tried to make good his threats is a mooted question. If he did, he failed, for Assemblyman Nelson was renominated by the Republican district convention at Sun Prairie, September 19, 1868. His leading opponent was again George Weeks, with five other candidates bringing up the rear. Mr. Nelson was "high man" on each of the three ballots, his vote climbing from twenty-one on the informal to thirty-two on the second formal. The secretary of the convention, Mr. L. J. Erdall, in his report to the State Journal, recorded that the motion to declare the nomination unanimous "carried with enthusiasm."

Second Term in Assembly

In the session of 1869 Assemblyman Nelson was even more active than in the preceding one. He introduced a large number of bills, including several of a local nature, affecting the city of Madison. The latter should in reality have been presented by the member from Madison, George B. Smith, an able lawyer, but inasmuch as Mr. Smith was a Democrat and the assembly was strongly Republican, it was probably deemed best for Mr. Nelson to father them.

At this session Mr. Nelson was among a minority that opposed a bill extending the right of suffrage to women. The bill was ordered engrossed by a vote of forty-two to nineteen and then passed by a vote of thirty-nine to twenty-two. On both roll calls Assemblyman Nelson voted against the bill.

The young legislator did two very drastic things in the 1869 session. At the opening he sprung this resolution:

"Resolved, that the sergeant-at-arms be requested to enforce good morals by prohibiting the chewing of tobacco in the assembly chamber."

In the light of Senator Nelson's national reputation as a tobacco chewer, it was a surprising thing to do. Strange to say, the resolution was adopted without oppo-

sition. It is probable, however, that the sergeant-at-arms carried out this edict about as effectively as the anti-smoking rule is enforced in the Minnesota legislature.

January 27 the young assemblyman proposed "that the committee on roads, bridges and ferries be directed to inquire into the expediency and feasibility of so amending the law in relation to highway taxes that all taxes may be paid in money and that all highway or road labor may be performed under contract let to the lowest bidder."

In the month of February the legislature of Minnesota paid a visit to the legislature of Wisconsin, at Madison, and Senator Nelson met a number of the men with whom he served a few years later in the Minnesota state senate.

In a celebrated senatorial contest the future Minnesota statesman supported Matt Carpenter as against James R. Doolittle and thus helped to send to the upper branch of congress one of the most brilliant orators and imposing figures that ever sat in that exalted body.

Chapter V

FROM KOSHKONONG TO ALEXANDRIA

"It is reported that Knute Nelson's visit to St. Paul on Monday was not for the purpose of revising the proof sheets of his coming work, entitled, 'Why I Left Wisconsin.'"

This little witticism appeared in the St. Paul Globe for July 26, 1882, in the midst of the memorable Kindred-Nelson congressional campaign. It was a subtle insinuation that Senator Nelson's Wisconsin record needed a lot of explaining. Strange as it may now seem, the Kindred partisans charged that he was virtually obliged to leave Dane county; that he was politically dead and came to Minnesota to make a fresh start, unhampered by his past record.

Among other things, they accused him of having been a "bolter" in Wisconsin, the same as they held him to be in the contest then raging in the "Bloody Fifth." They said he had run against a Judge Barron, after bolting the Republican convention, and been ingloriously defeated. Mr. Nelson's managers met this charge by publishing absolute proof that he had been a candidate only twice in Wisconsin—for assemblyman in 1867 and 1868, both times as the regular Republican nominee.

Now, it is possible that the Kindred managers did not intend to manufacture this Wisconsin bolting charge out of whole cloth; that they actually believed Mr. Nelson had been a bolter in Dane county, but had "gotten their wires crossed." As a matter of fact, while he had never been a bolting candidate against Judge Barron or anybody else, he had been involved in a bolter's campaign. Reference is had to his support of Mr. Spencer, the friend who engineered his successful campaign for assemblyman. This episode is narrated in Rasmus B. Anderson's "Autobiography," published in 1915.

Anderson's Version of Incident

Before the state convention the following year (1869), [writes Professor Anderson], a number of prominent Norwegians held a meeting in the Dane county courthouse for the purpose of securing the nomination of a Norwegian on the Republican state ticket. This group of our citizens had not been represented on a state ticket since the days of Hans Heg, he having been twice elected state prison commissioner before the war, at which time the commissioner was a regular state officer.

Knute Nelson was at the above mentioned meeting in the courthouse. He was called on to speak, but was not willing to commit himself. The meeting was asking for a Norwegian for secretary of state, but Knute Nelson had evidently promised to support an American friend of his, a Dane county man by name Spencer, for that place on the ticket. It may be added that it was Spencer who had helped Mr. Nelson to be elected assemblyman. Mr. Spencer was at this time serving as assistant secretary of state and was a candidate before the convention for the office of secretary. The Norwegians, convened at the courthouse, were steered mainly by John A. Johnson, and adopted a resolution recommending Ole C. Johnson, a brother of John A. Johnson, to the state convention for the nomination of secretary of state.

At the state convention the next day, the courthouse resolutions were read. Both Ole C. Johnson and Mr. Spencer were placed in nomination for secretary of state, but Spencer won by a substantial majority. Knute Nelson, who was a delegate, voted for Spencer.

The campaign had not progressed far when it appeared that Mr. Spencer, as assistant secretary of state, was guilty of irregularities in his accounts. A special meeting of the state committee was immediately called. Mr. Spencer's name was taken off the ticket and that of Llewellyn Breese of Columbia county substituted.

Mr. Spencer refused pointblank to acquiesce. He declared himself innocent of any irregularity in the office from which he had been removed and decided to run as an independent candidate. Knute Nelson loyally supported him. Spencer was overwhelmingly defeated at the polls in November and both Spencer and Nelson were dead politically. He moved to Cambridge, in the eastern part of the county and hung out his shingle as an attorney, but there was not much for a lawyer to do in that small village, and so Knute Nelson gathered up his personal effects and moved with his family to Alexandria, Minnesota, which has been his home ever since and where he soon entered upon that brilliant political career which has since been his good fortune.

The facts so clearly stated by Professor Anderson may be relied upon so far as they relate to the Spencer campaign. He was a professor in the University of Wisconsin in 1869, was keenly interested in the political

situation, and knew the parties involved, including Senator Nelson.

But his conclusion that Mr. Nelson was politically dead may well be taken with a grain of salt. His conduct as a politician may have been a tactical blunder, but does not put him in an unfavorable light as a man. Mr. Spencer was not proved guilty of misconduct in office in a judicial tribunal. The action of the Republican state central committee may have been unjust and arbitrary—he protested his innocence. He was Nelson's friend; had rendered him great service. Nelson stood by him when, refusing to admit the justice of the committee's action, he ran as an independent or bolting candidate. Men have committed far worse political sins than this and survived. If Knute Nelson had chosen to remain in Dane county he might have risen to a high place in the politics of Wisconsin, in spite of this interesting episode.

He was not a candidate for re-election as assemblyman in 1869. Whether this was due to his connection with Mr. Spencer's campaign for secretary of state or to other reasons has not been disclosed. It has never been customary for assemblymen in Dane county to serve many terms. Mr. Nelson had served two successive terms and may have felt that he had nothing to gain by a continuance in the office.

His Law Practice

His practice as a Madison lawyer had not been lucrative. It was not to be expected. He was a very young man and competed for business with many attorneys of large experience and great reputation. The Madison bar has always included some of the brightest legal luminaries of the west, and it is no easy matter for a young attorney to break in. It takes years of hard work as well as patient waiting.

Whether the move to Cambridge was a wise one is to be doubted. As Professor Anderson says, there was not much for a lawyer to do in that small village. Most of the cases there were of little consequence. Nelson

appeared for the defendant in many petty criminal cases and usually succeeded in clearing his client. He was unusually clever in entangling witnesses in the cross-examination and knew how to get on the good side of the jury.

Perhaps the most important trial, in which he appeared in Dane county, was the well known case against Mr. Krogh, who built a mill dam on Koshkonong creek, causing the waters to submerge much of the adjacent land. The injured farmers instituted proceedings against Krogh to compel him to remove the dam, and Mr. Nelson was their attorney. The trial lasted for days and was extremely bitter. The jury returned a verdict against the farmers, but the young lawyer aroused such feeling against Mr. Krogh that he was at last forced to yield and undid the damage by voluntarily lowering the dam.

First Saw Alexandria in 1871

Knute Nelson first saw Alexandria in June, 1871. "My health had not been good since my return from the war," said he, in an interview with the editor of the Alexandria Post-News in November, 1914. "Old Doctor Fox, Senator Vilas' father-in-law, frequently saw me. One day I told the doctor my story and asked his advice. He advised me to go to Minnesota.

As a boy I had known Mr. Aaker, then residing in Alexandria. He had been chairman of the supervisors of the township in which our farm lay, and had superintended the building of the road past our farm. I came to Alexandria and stayed a short time with Mr. Aaker's family. At the same time there was a man—I have forgotten his name—who was also looking over the country. We both wanted to see as much as we could, so we went to Tom Sprague's livery and hired a team and two-seated rig to drive to Fergus Falls. That town had just been started.

The young lawyer liked the future metropolis of the Minnesota Park Region very much and seriously thought of locating there, but finally decided in favor of the Douglas county village, because the United States land office was there, affording work for a lawyer in land cases. There was little law practice in northwestern

Minnesota in the early seventies, and every factor that was likely to contribute to future success had to be taken into consideration.

Nelson's First Minnesota Friend

Lars K. Aaker, Senator Nelson's first Minnesota friend, who was primarily responsible for his visit to Alexandria in June, 1871, and for his locating there, was a very prominent and influential pioneer citizen of Minnesota. He was born in Telemarken, Norway, September 19, 1825, and educated at the Hviteseid normal school. When twenty years old, he emigrated to America, locating in Dane county, Wisconsin. There he was a farmer and teacher. In 1857 he removed to Goodhue county, Minnesota, where he filed on a homestead and was elected representative to the state legislature.

When the Civil war broke out, Mr. Aaker enlisted, becoming first lieutenant in Company D, Third Minnesota volunteer infantry. He served during five sessions in the legislature as a representative from Goodhue county, removing to Alexandria in 1869, when he was appointed register of the land office. Later he represented Douglas and Pope counties in the state senate and was receiver of the United States land office at Crookston. It is probable that to him Knute Nelson owed more than to any other person for his early success in Minnesota.

Brought Wife and Son

Returning to his home at Cambridge, Mr. Nelson announced to his family and friends that he had decided to locate at Alexandria.

I sold what little furniture we had [continued the senator in his talk to the Post News editor], and collected what money I could and took some notes. I had been fairly successful as a lawyer for a beginner. With my wife and son, Henry, who was a baby, I started for Alexandria. Fearing that we might have trouble in securing living rooms, we left our little daughter, Ida, with my mother.

On arriving at St. Paul, we were told that our best plan would be to buy tickets to Morris, then the end of that branch of the railroad, as that was nearer to Alexandria than St. Cloud, the end of the other branch. We found, on reaching Benson, that only a mixed

train ran to Morris, and that there was no stage from that point to Alexandria. We got our supper in Benson and boarded the stage for Alexandria. We drove to Glenwood that night and stayed at the old Pettijohn hotel till morning. We arrived in Alexandria the next day about 11 o'clock, I think the 18th of August.

We stayed with Mr. and Mrs. Aaker for about two weeks before finding a house to move into. We then secured the old Sang house, a little three-room house, a mere shell, which later became known as the "Jack Plymat house." In the meantime, I opened an office with old Judge Reuben Reynolds. The judge occupied the front rooms on the second floor of the building, which stood about where the First National bank now stands. The rear rooms were occupied by L. K. Aaker, register of the United States land office.

I had told Mr. Aaker that I should like to take a homestead near Alexandria if possible. One day he came into the office and said there was 120 acres of rather rough land just outside of town that was available. This was a claim which L. W. Kilbourn had taken and which, when final proof was attempted, had been cancelled, without any contest, for lack of improvements.

I filed on the land. Mr. Kilbourn, who was away, returned and contested my right to the land. There was a small shanty, about 14x18 feet in size, on the place. This shanty was sided with basswood boards, lapped like siding. It was boarded upon the inside with the same kind of lumber. This lumber had been put on green and had seasoned, leaving large cracks. We moved into this shanty in October, after papering the walls with old newspapers. Before moving to the shanty, I had bought a big cook stove from Jake Austin, who was moving to Fergus Falls.

That was a severe winter. Mr. Kilbourn had cut off a good many saw logs near the shanty, leaving the tops. These were dry and not hard to make into firewood. As long as we could keep plenty of wood in the stove, we could keep warm, and many is the night I sat up half the night firing and my wife the other half, in order to keep warm.

In the spring, I cleared a small piece southwest of the shanty and George Gardner broke it up with a big team of oxen. I planted a garden and raised some of the best watermelons I ever saw. I also dug a well in the edge of a small slough southwest of the house and built a small stable for a cow.

The following winter came early. That was the winter of the great January storm. I had been elected county attorney that fall and the day the storm commenced, the county commissioners were in session. It was customary those days for the county attorney to sit with the commissioners. I brought a lunch with me and did not get through to start home till six o'clock. The road past the shanty was only a winter trail, cut through the timber and brush. It was piled two feet deep with snow and I was more than an hour getting home.

After resting, I dug my way to the stable, carrying in an abundance of hay. On making my way to the well, I found it drifted full

of snow and covered deep. I had to carry in and melt snow for the cow and for the house. I again cleared a way to the wood piles and carried into the shanty a big supply. I did not get to town that day. The next day was very cold, but the wind had gone down and I went to town.

I had planned to build on the claim the next summer, but the contest was not settled. Mr. Kilbourn took it before the land commissioner, who refused to reopen the case. He then carried it to the secretary of the interior, who, upon investigation, also refused to take the matter up. This all took time, and it was three years before I built what is now the ell to my present house. Magnus Lundgren of this city, and Otto Dahl, formerly of Carlos, did the carpenter work.

Well, there were some advantages in living in the shanty. I could not buy furniture, because there was no place to put it. There was not much law practice, but I got ahead a little. I had promised Mr. Kilbourn to pay him $100 for the shanty if I won. This I did, when the case was settled. Mr. Kilbourn came to my office and I took a kind of quit claim deed and gave him $100.

Our worst times were during the summer months. The brush came up close to the shanty; there were lots of little sloughs and the mosquitoes and heat were terrible. There were only two windows, the old-fashioned eight-by-ten half sash each. The only way to open them was to take them out. Many women would have found fault, but my wife took those hardships of the pioneer days as a matter of course. Well, I sometimes look back at those days with pleasure.

In this fashion Knute Nelson became a resident of Alexandria. In this little city, now one of the fairest communities in the northwest, he was destined to sojourn to the end of his life, except when official duty called him to the state and the national capital. The simple narrative we have quoted, terse and natural, like one of the Norse sagas which Knute Nelson loved to read, serves as a fitting introduction to an epic as unique and thrilling in its way as the exploits celebrated by the skalds of old.

The "Claim-Jumping" Charge

The circumstances under which the future senator obtained his homestead led to the charge in after years that he was a "claim jumper." In the Kindred-Nelson campaign, when nothing was left unsaid in the way of bitter abuse and personal villification, this charge was used to the limit, and even in the gubernatorial campaign of 1892 it was revived and sprung on the eve of the elec-

tion, too late for refutation, by the scurrilous Populist organ, The Great West.

Nobody loves a claim jumper. In the pioneer days he came like a hawk in the early dawn and swooped down upon the claim of some unwary homesteader, who had gone away, perhaps to earn a few dollars with which to pay debts, or make needed improvements. On his return he would find the claim jumper in possession of his shanty. The pretext of the interloper was that the original homesteader had not complied with the requirements of the land department—that he was not living on his homestead or that he was not making the necessary improvements.

Sometimes endless litigation resulted and sometimes fierce encounters between the claim-jumper and the original homesteader. If the homesteader had been a decent fellow, his neighbors would always rally to his support, and many a time were claim jumpers driven from a community by the angry and determined pioneers.

Senator Nelson's lucid statement of the matter in the interview quoted shows that the original homesteader, Mr. Kilbourn, contested his right to the land and that he was away at the time the future senator filed on the claim and took possession. In these respects, then, it was a typical case of claim-jumping. But in another and decisive respect Nelson was innocent of such a charge, because at the time he filed on the land and took possession of the premises Mr. Kilbourn had no legal rights in the property. His homestead had been cancelled by the government on July 31, 1871, several months before Mr. Nelson made his filing.

These facts were admitted by Soren Listoe, a political enemy of Knute Nelson's and supporter of Charles F. Kindred in the campaign of 1882. Mr. Listoe, who later became rather prominent as a United States consul, was then register of the land office at Fergus Falls, and wrote the following letter on September 13, 1882:

Editor Evening Journal, Minneapolis, Minnesota:

Sir: In reply to your favor of the 10th inst., I have to state that there is no such thing as a "quit claim" to the United States known

in connection with this office. I presume you mean a voluntary relinquishment to the United States and I have to inform you that the records of this office do not show that Mr. L. W. Kilbourn ever executed or filed any relinquishment of the tract described by you.

On the contrary, Mr. Kilbourn's homestead, No. 64, for the southwest of the southwest quarter, of section 20, township 128, range 37, was cancelled in accordance with instructions contained in a letter from the commissioner of the general land office at Washington, dated July 31, 1871, for the reason that Mr. Kilbourn had not sufficiently cultivated the land, etc. One Knute Nelson filed a homestead on the same tract of land October 10th, 1871.

Very respectfully,

Soren Listoe, Register.

It may be added that Mr. Kilbourn and Mr. Nelson became friends in later years, according to the Douglas County News, which discussed the "claim-jumping" charges at length in the Kindred-Nelson campaign and fully absolved Mr. Nelson of unworthy conduct in the transaction.

Early Douglas County History

When the young Wisconsin lawyer arrived at Alexandria, Douglas county was still on the western frontier. The first settlers arrived in 1857, the oldest communities being at Holmes City and Alexandria. There were no railroads and practically no wagon roads. The best of these was the famous Red River trail. The land was rich and beautiful. Here were stretches of grassy prairie that had never known sickle or scythe; there, groves of dense hardwood that had never felt an axe. Wonderful lakes, whose beauty the whole country has come to recognize, lay everywhere, teeming with fish. Wild deer and game birds made the land a paradise for hunters. The early settlers did not have to worry over the butcher's meat bill. One farmer at Holmes City killed over ninety deer one winter.

A temporary county organization was effected in 1859, but three years later, when the Indian scare sent the settlers flying to the east, the organization was abandoned and the records lost. It was not until 1866 that a permanent county government was established, as the fear of Indian massacres kept the settlers back for many

years after the desirability of the land had been demonstrated.

The famous old government stockade was built at Alexandria in 1862, when the village was made a government post. It was a large, rectangular enclosure, made of logs, set in the ground, close together. It stood on a low hill just south of the site of the present Great Northern freight depot and was an object of great interest for many years after the post was abandoned. Inside the enclosure stood the soldiers' barracks and many huts, which were occupied by the panic-stricken settlers after their return. J. H. Van Dyke, the pioneer merchant, even moved his store inside the stockade and weighed out staple groceries for his appreciative customers.

The first townships in Douglas county were those of Osakis and Alexandria, incorporated in 1866. In the spring of 1867, W. E. Hicks and Thomas F. Cowing built a two-story frame structure at Alexandria with four rooms and an entry on the ground floor and a large room upstairs. This building was rented by the county commissioners for the use of the county, which did not build a courthouse until 1876. The present courthouse, a brick structure, was erected in 1894-95.

Alexandria in 1871

When Knute Nelson reached his new home in August, 1871, Alexandria had a population of about 600 and Douglas county had about 4,500 inhabitants. It was still a primitive community in every sense of the word. The expectant settlers had high hopes that the railroad would soon be extended from St. Cloud, but there were endless delays and disappointments; it was not until November 5, 1878, that the first train rolled into the village. Then a great celebration was held, with all sorts of enthusiasm and rejoicing.

New settlers arrived in wagons drawn by horses; scores of "prairie schooners" rumbled and creaked over the trail to the Red river valley, most of them loaded with Scandinavians, who were attracted to that fertile region by the masterly descriptions of Paul Hjelm-Han-

sen, published in Norwegian papers both in America and Norway. Hjelm-Hansen was a well educated Norwegian author and journalist, who had come to America for the special purpose of discouraging emigration from his native land, as he believed it was better for both Norway and its sturdy peasants or "bonder," that they stick to the old home; but when he saw the wonderful natural resources of the northwest, he turned about face and, with eloquent pen, urged his countrymen to migrate. And they came in ever-increasing numbers. So also did the Norwegians and Swedes of Illinois, Wisconsin and southern Minnesota.

When Hjelm-Hansen first visited Alexandria in the summer of 1869, he found there six Scandinavian clerks, thirty Scandinavian day laborers and twelve servants of northern birth. There were also several Scandinavian business men, painters, hotel keepers, a mason and a wagon-maker.

> There had even been organized a "Scandinavian society" [says Professor Theodore C. Blegen in the Minnesota Historical Society's Quarterly Magazine], and it had forty members. The Rev. Nils O. Brandt of Decorah, Iowa, visited Alexandria while Hjelm-Hansen was there in the summer of 1869 and held a Norwegian service in the village. . . . . Hjelm-Hansen also states that during the previous fall two Scandinavian ministers had visited Alexandria to baptize and confirm. . . . . .
>
> Two years before Hjelm-Hansen made his western journey, a book dealing with the Scandinavians in the United States and Canada was published by Johan Schroeder at La Crosse, in which there is an interesting account of Douglas county. The author states that "150 Norwegian and Swedish families have established themselves in the six southern townships of that county. . . . . Special mention is made of Holmes City and Alexandria.

Yes, there were many Scandinavians in Alexandria and Douglas county when Knute Nelson came. The census for 1870 shows that there were in that year no less than 1,227 Swedes and Norwegians and seventy-one Danes in the county. From this we may conclude that about one-third of the population of Douglas county, in August, 1871, was Scandinavian.

The land office, which had been opened in February, 1869, was doing a genuine "land office business" when

the future senator appeared on the scene. Here is the record for the month of June, 1871: Number of homesteads filed, 208; number of pre-emptions, 102; number of acres entered with cash, 3,596; number of acres entered with script, 3,166; number of acres entered with warrant, 3,280.

The young lawyer soon discovered that things did not smell just right in the village. "We doubt," said the Alexandria Post in its issue of September 16, 1871, "if there is a town in the state where less attention is paid to cleanliness than in Alexandria. Manure heaps, pig sties and kitchen drains are left to accumulate from year to year, to rot in the sun and send forth filthy odors." That was unfortunate. But perhaps it was no worse in Alexandria than in Fergus Falls or Holmes City. It may be that when Editor Joseph Gilpin wrote that item he was in ill humor and wanted to get even with the town for not giving him the patronage and support he deserved. It was not so easy to make the Post pay, even though the many official notices issued by the land office helped a great deal.

All of the residences and business houses were built of lumber. Main street was neither paved nor graveled, and was anything but level. During heavy showers little lakes formed in the wide thoroughfare, making it almost impossible for the people to cross from one side to the other without getting their feet soaked.

Long before the Volstead act began to function, Alexandria was a dry town, the home of famous "drys," like Senator E. E. Lobeck, but in the good old seventies it was not necessary for the thirsty, of whom there were plenty, to resort to moonshine to find relief from sorrow. Alexandria was then a wide-open town and the saloons rivalled the land office in the volume of business transacted.

Before the railroad came it was the stage which transported the travelers between the village and the outside world, and the Post was loud in its praise of the efficient service given by the stage owners. When the weather was dry, these stages made remarkably fast

time, and it did not take so very long to get from Alexandria to the railroad lines at St. Cloud, Morris or Benson.

When the railroad finally came to Alexandria, in 1878, it was nothing like the Great Northern and Soo lines, which now serve the city. The old St. Paul and Pacific road used soft iron rails, which flattened and became uneven, making very rough riding for the passengers. The locomotives were much lighter than the monsters we see today, and burned wood, instead of coal. Huge piles of wood lined the right of way at the stations, and the train crews were obliged to take on a new supply at almost every stopping place.

> "The old order changeth, giving place to new,
> And God fulfills himself in many ways."

Chapter VI

FRONTIER LAWYER AND POLITICIAN

May God bless the country editor!

He is of the salt of the earth, which he frequently proves by saying bitter things. His brothers of the metropolitan press delight in poking fun at his naiveté or simplicity, at his painstaking enumeration of the thousand and one little things that make up the life of his community; but he does a far more important work than these clever writers imagine. The country editor not only holds the mirror up to nature, as was said of the poet, but he is the faithful historian of his community. From day to day, from week to week, he records the events that seem almost ridiculously trivial at the time, but which decades, generations and centuries hence will be searched with eager interest by future historians and investigators. And the historical societies, like that of our own state, are giving an invaluable service to posterity by preserving copies of all these papers for the use of investigators.

If Alexandria, Minnesota, had not, almost from its inception, been blessed with one or more good local newspapers, it would be nearly impossible today to write a complete and accurate history of the life of Knute Nelson.

For fifty years the editors of the Post, the News, the Post News (a consolidation of these two), the Citizen, the Republican, the Park Region Echo and finally the Citizen News (a consolidation of the Post News and Citizen) chronicled the acts and deeds of their distinguished fellow citizen. They told of his goings and comings (and sometimes his shortcomings); recorded his sayings and speeches and reminiscences and opinions; reprinted from exchanges, opinions about him, both favorable and unfavorable; reprinted from metropolitan dailies, periodicals and magazines, pen pictures of him

by brilliant reporters and writers, and thus through the years, as he grew in experience, in wisdom, in greatness and fame, they unconsciously created for future investigators material out of which it is now possible to weave a complete and accurate story of his life, and to paint a picture of him, vivid, real and true. To be sure, the great dailies of St. Paul and Minneapolis must not be overlooked. From day to day they told the story of Knute Nelson's dramatic political campaigns, after he became a state character, and during his term as governor and his service in Washington they recorded his official acts, praised him, criticized him, but never ignored him. Nobody ignored the Viking—he was too striking a figure for that—in this respect something like Andrew Jackson, Lincoln, Roosevelt, LaFollette.

Apparently the arrival of Knute Nelson, in August, 1871, did not create much of a stir in the frontier village, or else Editor Gilpin was not properly discharging his duties as reporter. The Alexandria Post, a little four-page sheet, started three years before, with two pages of local matter and two of "patent inside," or "ready print," made no mention of the young lawyer until October 14, 1871.

On that day, in a report of the district court proceedings, it says: "Knute Nelson, Esq., having passed a very creditable examination, was admitted to practice in all the courts of the state."

That was the first mention of Knute Nelson in an Alexandria newspaper and probably in any Minnesota newspaper. It is therefore of no little historic interest and importance. And note the character of it: "A very creditable examination." That was excellent publicity to start with—a valuable introduction to the readers of the Post and prospective clients. Note, also, the title of "esquire" appended to Mr. Nelson's name. Whenever the editor wished to treat a man with respect he gave his name that dignified, old-fashioned handle.

The first trial in which Knute Nelson appeared as

counsel, reported by Editor Gilpin, occurred early in January, 1872.

"Peter Stearn," says the Post for January 6, "was arrested before Justice Ames on Wednesday last on complaint of F. F. N. de Flon, charging him with having forged C. Raiter's name to a promissory note in favor of F. B. Van Hoesen. J. S. Randolph and Smith Bloomfield appeared for the prosecution and J. S. Mower and K. Nelson for the defense. On motion the complaint was held insufficient and the same dismissed and defendant released. We understand a new complaint has been filed and the sheriff is after the bird, which probably has flown."

Yes, the "bird" flew to parts unknown, for never again did his name appear in the Post. How much "K. Nelson" got for his services in defending him is not known. The fees the future senator got as a pioneer lawyer were of a large variety, both in size and quality. Once, he told a Minneapolis friend, he defended a former saloonkeeper, who had no money, but plenty of whisky. So it was agreed that the lawyer should receive a barrel of whisky, which he put in the cellar of his farm home. This fact was discovered by the hired men, and one Sunday evening, when Mr. and Mrs. Nelson returned after a visit with friends, they found the men dead drunk in the vicinity of the barrel. That necessitated the removal of the barrel and in the future no more whisky was accepted as a fee.

In the Post for January 13, 1872, appeared the young attorney's professional card:

KNUTE NELSON

Attorney and Counsellor at Law and Notary Public.

Office Next Door to Land Office, Main Street,
Alexandria, Minnesota.

In the same issue this was printed among the local items: "In another column will be found the card of Knute Nelson, Esq. As Mr. Nelson is a jovial fellow, as well as sound lawyer, we hope those in trouble will give him a call."

Senator Nelson brought with him to Alexandria between $300 and $400 worth of law books.

"I devoted most of my time to the practice of law," he wrote in 1911 to D. B. Arnold of Mississippi, "but, of course, in a new country it was rather scant and limited at first, although I managed to get on one side or the other of about every case of importance in the six or seven counties in my part of the country. For about twelve years I was in active practice and did pretty well."

The files of the Post and the News, during the seventies and early eighties, bear ample evidence of his activity and prominence as a lawyer. His name appears as attorney in a large portion of the cases that are mentioned. He "rode the circuit" in much the same manner as Lincoln did in Illinois thirty years before. As there were no railroads, the attorneys rode from one county seat to the other in the stage or in vehicles of their own. In those days much larger crowds attended the sessions of the court than is the case at the present time, and an attorney who had ability as a "mixer" and could speak Swedish and Norwegian as well as English, had an excellent opportunity to become acquainted. The shrewd young man from Koshkonong availed himself of every opportunity to make friends on these interesting tours. He did not mince matters in trying a case, going after the opposing side and adverse witnesses with rare vigor; but when the trial was over he took pains to be pleasant to all, friend or foe.

He had unusual ability in remembering names and faces. It was said of him in those days that, if he met a man once and talked with him, he forgot neither his name nor his face. This was, no doubt, an exaggeration, but it is certain that on account of his good memory in this respect, he won for himself a host of friends in the counties he visited as a lawyer, and thus prepared the way for his successful campaigns for state senator, congressman and governor.

For about five years Mr. Nelson practiced alone, but in November, 1875, he formed a partnership with George H. Reynolds, and thereafter, until his retirement

as an attorney in 1892, he had one or two partners practically all of the time. Among his partners, besides Mr. Reynolds, were Mr. Ames, Mr. Treat and Senator C. J. Gunderson.

Elected County Attorney

Things moved rapidly in politics for Knute Nelson after his arrival in Alexandria. A man did not have to be an old resident to enter politics on the frontier. Only one year after he had moved into his claim shanty, the young lawyer was elected prosecuting attorney of Douglas county. A Republican convention, called for the purpose of nominating county officers, was held at Alexandria, September 28, 1872, and the former Wisconsin assemblyman was named for county attorney. If there were any rival candidate or candidates, Editor Gilpin forgot to mention that fact in his report of the convention proceedings. Fred von Baumbach, later state auditor of Minnesota and United States internal revenue collector, was the nominee for county auditor. He and Mr. Nelson were steadfast friends until separated by death some forty years afterward.

That was the year of the Grant-Greeley presidential contest. Horace Austin, St. Peter, was governor and was renominated for another term. William H. Yale, Winona, was lieutenant governor and aspired to be his own successor. Colonel Hans Mattson, Minneapolis, was secretary of state, but was displaced in the Republican state convention by S. P. Jennison, Red Wing. William Seeger, St. Paul, was state treasurer, and gave way to Edwin W. Dyke, Faribault. O. P. Whitcomb, Rochester, was state auditor and was succeeded by W. W. Braden, Preston. F. R. E. Cornell, Minneapolis, was attorney general; A. J. Edgerton, St. Paul, was railroad commissioner by appointment of the governor; Christopher G. Ripley, Chatfield, was chief justice of the supreme court. John T. Averill was congressman in the Third district, which included the Twin Cities and all of the state to the north.

Judging by the Post, there was but little excitement

over the election in Alexandria and Douglas county. Some of the Republican nominees had no opposition. Among these was the young Norwegian named for prosecuting attorney, who received 1,128 votes, next to the largest number cast for any candidate.

Knute Nelson held his first Minnesota office until January, 1875. During his incumbency he was careful and efficient, avoiding drastic and sensational tactics and methods. He sent a number of criminals to the county jail and the state penitentiary, but no murderers to the gallows.

Candidate for the State Senate

From a political standpoint, Mr. Nelson's election as county attorney was a mere incident in his career. It had no special significance, and his record in the office was never an issue or bone of contention in his future campaigns.

Not so the next position he sought in the public service. The office of state senator, to which he was elected by the voters of the Thirty-ninth district in 1874, brought him into a larger sphere, where he touched elbows with many of the leading men of the state, and made his name familiar to the voters of the five counties that composed his district, and also known to a goodly portion of the electors of the entire state. The legislature has always been a stepping stone to higher positions in the public service.

The Thirty-ninth legislative district, which Knute Nelson represented in the senate in four annual sessions, embraced not only Douglas county, but also Pope, Grant, Stevens and Big Stone—a veritable empire, but an empire only sparsely settled. Douglas had by the far the largest population and generally grabbed the senatorship.

Mr. Nelson's candidacy for senator came as a surprise to most of the citizens of Alexandria. He had not been thought of in that connection by the community in general. It was taken for granted that Francis B. Van Hoesen, former representative to the state legislature, banker and lawyer, who had been a leading and

public-spirited citizen of the village almost from its beginning, would be the nominee of the Republican party and elected as a matter of course. He was the candidate of the business interests of the village and was highly recommended by the Post. Also at Glenwood, Mr. Van Hoesen was regarded as the "next state senator." Said the old Glenwood Eagle for September 12, 1874: "F. B. Van Hoesen, the next state senator from this district, was in town Monday examining the crops." The editor did not explain what "crops" he was examining, whether political or agricultural.

The Republican senatorial convention was held at Alexandria, September 28, 1874, with twenty-one delegates in attendance. The names of two candidates were presented for consideration, those of F. B. Van Hoesen and Knute Nelson. The ballot stood: Van Hoesen, seventeen votes; Nelson, four.

In its next issue—that of October 2, 1874—the Post said editorially: "Of Mr. Van Hoesen we need say but little. His high character, both as a private gentleman and a public spirited and energetic member of the Republican party are too well known to the majority of our readers to need comment by us. He is an old resident and his interests are all within the district. He represented this county in the legislature with honor and ability three years ago and is, in our opinion, just the man to represent us in the state senate."

A very hearty indorsement, that—not much comfort in those words for Knute Nelson or any other aspirant. How came it that in the face of the small vote he received in the convention, and of this strong indorsement of the Republican nominee by the home paper, the county attorney, nevertheless, threw his "hat into the ring?"

"My impression is," writes M. A. Wollan, Glenwood, Minnesota, who in 1874 was an active Republican and nominee of his party for auditor of Pope county, "that the Republican senatorial convention was manipulated by a few men in Alexandria, who were friendly to Van Hoesen, who received the nomination."

That charge was made at the time and indignantly denied by Mr. Van Hoesen's friends. Peculiarly enough, no reference is made to Knute Nelson's independent candidacy in the Post from the day of the senatorial convention until after the election in November. The editor continued to boost Mr. Van Hoesen, without attacking Mr. Nelson. Strange conduct, that, in a staunch Republican like Editor Gilpin! Was it not his solemn duty under the circumstances to lay the lash of righteous indignation and scorn on the young Norwegian bolter? But not a single "knock" enlivened the columns of the Post during the entire campaign.

Obviously Editor Gilpin believed that Knute Nelson had a lot of warm friends and that discretion was the better part of valor. Obviously, too, he liked the Norwegian lawyer, whom he called a "jovial fellow," and did not think it would be such a serious calamity if the independent candidate was elected and the Republican nominee defeated. It is not so easy for an editor in a small town to steer a safe course through dangerous political waters, but Joseph Gilpin did that very thing at Alexandria in the contest between F. B. Van Hoesen and Knute Nelson. Like a true Republican, he praised and indorsed the nominee of the party. Like a wise owl, he kept still about the other fellow, who had all sorts of friends out among the farmers, especially the Swedes and Norwegians, who were just as valuable subscribers as the rest.

"This was the year when they had the anti-Monopolist party," writes Elmer E. Adams, the well known publicist and legislator of Fegus Falls. "In view of the fact that there was a breakaway at that time, Nelson was never criticized for his conduct."

That Knute Nelson had reason to believe that a large body of voters were back of him, goes without saying. Otherwise he would not have run as an independent. At a so-called "People's Mass Convention," held at Glenwood, September 26, 1874, two days before the district convention at Alexandria, Mr. Nelson had been placed in nomination for senator. That conven-

tion was attended by 100 citizens of Pope county, the various towns being generally represented.

While his name was presented to the Republican district convention, it is apparent that he was not a very active candidate for the nomination, which may account in part for the poor showing he made. But he was a candidate. Says an official in a county adjoining Douglas, who was a youngster employed in the Post office in 1874, in a letter dated September 24, 1925:

> You refer to the senatorial convention held in 1874, at which F. B. Van Hoesen was nominated for senator, and in reference to that convention will say that Mr. Nelson was a candidate before the convention and was defeated. I distinctly remember that there was a big howl when he entered the campaign as an independent candidate. At that time every candidate furnished his own ticket, and when the voters went to the polls in November, it was especially noticeable that in the heavy Scandinavian towns the voters came to the polls with the Nelson tickets in their vest pockets and placed the same in the ballot box. Those were the days when nationality cut a figure, and while the regular politicians of Douglas county were supporting Van Hoesen, Knute managed to steal away the votes at the critical moment.

The contest between Mr. Nelson and Mr. Van Hoesen was a rather spirited and notable campaign, but without much bitterness. It left no particular sting and did not materially weaken the future senator in his subsequent campaigns. Whatever disappointment or resentment Mr. Van Hoesen may have felt, he overcame, and in the Kindred-Nelson congressional campaign eight years later he was among Mr. Nelson's prominent supporters, being one of his delegates to the Republican district convention. He was in all respects a high-minded, public-spirited citizen, one of the largest contributors to the fund raised for the construction of Alexandria's handsome public library, a supporter of all worthy movements, a disinterested public servant as mayor of the village and as state senator, in both of which capacities he served after his defeat in 1874.

Mr. Nelson was elected because of superior ability as a lawyer and campaigner and, very likely, because of the large Scandinavian vote in the counties of Douglas,

Pope and Grant. Grant, especially, gave him a decisive majority, and that was overwhelmingly Norwegian. Nelson carried every county, except Big Stone, which he also lost to Charles F. Kindred in 1882. The village of Alexandria returned a small majority for Van Hoesen, but Douglas county as a whole went for Nelson. The result by counties was:

	Van Hoesen	Nelson
Douglas	509	642
Pope	292	409
Grant	23	173
Stevens	53	63
Big Stone	29	0
Totals	910	1287

Nelson's Record in State Senate

When the legislature opened in January, 1875, Senator Nelson was received by his colleagues as a Republican, and his name appears as a Republican in the "Legislative Manual" of that year.

The Minnesota senate of 1875 was a notable body. Men of unusual prominence, past, present or future, took part in its deliberations. The Fourteenth district sent Morton S. Wilkinson, former United States senator. From Minneapolis came John S. Pillsbury, the distinguished business leader and future governor of the state. Ignatius Donnelly, the celebrated Sage of Nininger, former congressman, brilliant orator and litterateur, represented Dakota county. Charles H. Graves, long prominent in Minnesota politics, and in later years United States minister to Sweden, was there, with credentials from Duluth. St. Paul contributed Elias F. Drake, prominent banker and president of the St. Paul & Sioux City Railroad company, and Michael Doran, long famous as a Democratic boss and dispenser of patronage. Albert E. Rice, a future lieutenant governor, represented the territory around Willmar. Charles H. Berry, the first attorney general of the state, was senator from the Eighth district. Amos Cogswell, former speaker of the house of representatives, and able lawyer, served as

spokesman for the people of Steele county. From southern Minnesota came Lucius F. Hubbard, who was destined to become governor. Other members of distinction were Thomas H. Armstrong, William P. Murray, Doctor Levi Butler, W. H. C. Folsom, R. B. Langdon, Henry G. Page and Milo White. There were forty-one senators altogether—with few exceptions men of far more than ordinary ability.

In the three subsequent sessions of the state senate in which Mr. Nelson participated, he served with other men of ability and distinction. One was Charles A. Pillsbury, a nephew of John S. Pillsbury, and interested with him in the milling industry in Minneapolis. Another was William H. Yale, former lieutenant governor. A third was Alonzo J. Edgerton, a prominent jurist and for a brief period United States senator. Still others were John B. Gilfillan, Minneapolis attorney and congressman; James Smith, Jr., able lawyer and railroad manager, of St. Paul; C. F. McDonald, prominent as a newspaper publisher and editor; A. B. Robbins, then of Willmar, later a resident of Hennepin county.

The governor of the state was Cushman K. Davis, St. Paul, with whom Knute Nelson sat in the United States senate twenty years afterward, one of the most gifted public men in the entire nation. Alphonso Barto, Sauk Center, later active in the Kindred-Nelson campaign, and ardent supporter of Governor Nelson for United States senator in 1895, was lieutenant governor and, as such, presided over the senate. Edwin W. Dyke was state treasurer; O. P. Whitcomb, state auditor; S. P. Jennison, secretary of state, and George P. Wilson, attorney general. John S. Pillsbury succeeded Governor Davis, being chief executive during the last two years of Mr. Nelson's service as senator.

The interest of both branches of the legislature was largely centered upon the election of a United States senator to succeed Alexander Ramsey, the old political war horse, who had served as Minnesota's first territorial governor and was closing his second term in the upper branch of congress. The legislature convened on

January 5. On the evening of January 14, the Republican members of the house and the senate met in joint caucus to nominate a candidate for United States senator. The active aspirants were Senator Alexander Ramsey, Governor Cushman K. Davis, former Governor Horace Austin and William D. Washburn. Forty-two votes constituted a majority of the Republican caucus, which Senator Ramsey obtained on the second day of the balloting, but owing to the extremely bitter feeling against the senator, many of the Republican members refused to abide by the result of the caucus, and a protracted deadlock resulted—a deadlock that continued to February 20, near the close of the session. It was the most memorable, most bitter senatorial contest in the history of the state, with the possible exception of the Washburn-Nelson contest of 1895.

In the beginning the contest was chiefly a duel between Senator Ramsey and Governor Davis. Ramsey was an old man and stood for the old regime and the old spirit in Minnesota politics; Davis was still young, being only in his thirty-sixth year, and was the standard bearer of a new order and a more progressive spirit.

Senator Nelson supported Ramsey and voted for him so long as his name was under consideration. When it became apparent that neither Ramsey nor Davis could win, and both withdrew, Mr. Nelson first voted for S. J. R. McMillan, then for W. D. Washburn, and finally swung back to McMillan, being one of the eighty-two that gave him a majority. Why the senator from Douglas failed to support Governor Davis was never disclosed, at least not in the press. The relations between the two never were particularly cordial in after years, until they became colleagues in the United States senate. In the Kindred-Nelson campaign Davis was outspoken in his support of Kindred and it was freely hinted in the newspapers that he was opposed to Nelson as the Republican choice for governor in 1892 and did not wish to see him elected United States senator in 1895.

Mr. Nelson was an active, able, useful senator. His experience in the Wisconsin assembly served as an excel-

lent preparation. He knew how legislation was carried on, how things were accomplished, both in the committees and on the floor of the senate. He was a good parliamentarian, a ready and effective debater. He did not shine as an orator—he never did. He was not even brilliant, as we commonly understand that term. The only time he was brilliant was in private conversation. His conversation sparkled with keen humor and terse, epigrammatical expressions. To hear him then was a rare entertainment, delightful and instructive.

When he went to St. Paul in 1875, the thing that was uppermost in his mind was the railroad question. How to get the railroad extended from St. Cloud to Alexandria and beyond was the big problem before the people of Douglas county, and they counted on Senator Nelson to solve it, or at least play a prominent part in the solution. The farmers, especially, suffered from the lack of a railroad. It cost them twenty-two cents per bushel to get their wheat transported to the nearest railway, while the merchandise they had to buy was proportionately higher by reason of the excessive transportation charge. So anxious were Senator Nelson's constituents for a railroad that they were willing to "walk on their heads to get one," said one of the local editors in defending Mr. Nelson's senate railroad record in the campaign of 1892.

But, you will ask, how could Senator Nelson get the railroad extended to Alexandria? What did the senate or the entire legislature have to do with such a proposition? It had a great deal to do with it, for, while the state did not own the railroads, it had aided them in raising capital by extensive land grants and by various kinds of special favors. The young state keenly felt the need of better transportation facilities, and the legislature had been extremely generous in extending aid and encouragement to the railroad companies. The state had a direct interest in the St. Paul and Pacific road by virtue of the lands it had ceded to the company on condition that it should extend its lines to certain points in the state within a stipulated time. On these lands the company had borrowed heavily, but on account of mismanagement and

unfavorable conditions it had been unable to build the lines it had agreed to build, one of which was the St. Vincent extension through Alexandria.

When I first went to the legislature [said Senator Nelson in a public speech at St. Paul, February 3, 1913], the people of the Park Region were without a railroad, and that is what I went to the legislature to get. I tried to induce S. S. Merrill of the Milwaukee system to take up the old St. Paul and Pacific, then in receivership, and extend it. Mr. Merrill didn't think it would pay. Then I went to Mr. Hill. Mr. Hill gave me a ray of hope, saying he had friends in Canada ready to take the matter up. Mr. Hill said the old land grant had lapsed, but that if it could be extended, they might build. I got the legislature to extend the grant. We were so hungry for a railroad that we never thought of castigating them.

Senator Nelson found it necessary to extend the land grant twice. The first extension, to the end of the year 1876, was made in the session of 1875. That proved insufficient and a second was made in 1877.

The Hill-Nelson Alliance

Senator Nelson's work in promoting the extension of the St. Vincent branch of the St. Paul and Pacific lines became the basis of violent attacks in his campaign for governor in 1892, with Ignatius Donnelly leading the charge. Donelly was then the Populist leader and candidate for governor, and in his organ, The Great West, he caused to be published a series of articles which denounced the Republican candidate as a special friend and agent of James J. Hill and his railroad interests. Mr. Donnelly recited in detail, both in these articles and in his campaign speeches, the alleged nefarious transactions of Knute Nelson as state senator. He knew whereof he spoke, he said, for he was there as a fellow senator. The Sage of Nininger had exceptional talent for denunciation—in that respect he has never known a peer in Minnesota. He invaded Douglas county, launching a fierce attack even in the city of Alexandria. Mr. Nelson's friends in the home community countered by maintaining that he had acted in the interests of his constituents, with their full knowledge and approval, while

Mr. Donnelly, they charged, was serving the interests of the Northern Pacific.

Knute Nelson and Ignatius Donnelly, one a descendant of Norse Vikings, the other a bold, war-like son of old Erin, had many a clash in their day, both in the Minnesota senate and in the state at large.

Some of these clashes revealed considerable humor. For instance, it is related that once, when Donnelly delivered one of his brilliant speeches, he closed with a famous Latin verse. In his reply, Nelson ended with a quotation from a stirring Norwegian poem. This time the laugh was on the Sage.

Donnelly was one of the most interesting and most remarkable characters in the history of Minnesota. Born in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, November 3, 1831, he received a high school education, read law and was admitted to the bar, practising with great success until 1856, when he purchased a large tract of land at Nininger, Dakota county, Minnesota. The next year he found himself a bankrupt as a result of the nation-wide panic, and resumed the practice of law. Two years later he appeared on the lecture platform with brilliant success, and was also elected lieutenant governor on the Republican ticket. In 1862 he was elected congressman and served three terms, winning a national reputation as a speaker. He was defeated for a fourth term in congress. From that time until his death he was usually at war with the powers that controlled the politics of the state and was regarded as a radical of radicals. Brilliant as a speaker, he was even more able with his pen, and achieved more than national renown as an author. His best known works are "Atlantis," "Ragnarok," "Caesar's Column," "Doctor Huguet," "The Golden Bottle" and the "Great Cryptogram," in which he sought to establish Lord Bacon's authorship of the Shakespearian plays. He died while on a visit in Minneapolis, January 1, 1901. His genius was recognized by all and, though at constant war with many of his fellow men, was loved and idolized by thousands.

During his entire service in the state legislature, Sen-

ator Nelson was a member of the committee on railroads and the judiciary committee. He sought a place on the former because of his special interest in obtaining railroad facilities for the people of the Park Region. His profession as a lawyer entitled him to membership in the other. Both were among the principal committees of the senate. He was very active in introducing and helping to pass bills amending the laws affecting the courts and legal procedure. He stood for economy, but was a true friend of the state's educational interests. One of the acts he fathered was the admirable public library law, under the provisions of which the Alexandria Free Public library and scores of similar beneficent associations in the state were organized. Senator Nelson was active in the organization of the home library and was later instrumental in supplying it with one of the most complete sets of public books and documents in the state. When the new Carnegie library at Alexandria was built he contributed $600 toward its construction.

And while he took an active part in general legislation—measures affecting the entire state—he was always mindful of local needs. He introduced and succeeded in putting through bills appropriating money for the construction of several bridges in his district; also bills for new roads and for the improvement of roads. Legislation for the relief of the farmers on account of the grasshopper plague had his earnest support.

When he retired from the senate, he had built for himself a reputation as a legislator of unusual ability, sound of judgment, forceful and clear in presenting his views and arguments, tactful, resourceful and with exceptional capacity for work.

Chapter VII

CONGRESSIONAL ASPIRATIONS

It has been stated a thousand times that Knute Nelson never lost a political battle.

In a certain sense this statement is true; in another sense it is not. We have already seen that in 1874 he was defeated for state senator in the Republican convention, but ran as an independent and was elected. In that instance he lost the preliminary round, but was victorious in the main bout.

Two years later he was a candidate for congressman in the Republican convention and was defeated. He accepted his defeat and did not appeal from the decision of the delegates to the people of the district. He was not an aggressive candidate, but there is not wanting evidence that he felt pangs of disappointment over the outcome.

To the Fergus Falls Journal belongs the distinction of being the first newspaper to propose Knute Nelson for congressman. On April 6, 1876, it printed a lengthy editorial, in which it held that the time had come to elect a congressman from the vast territory north and west of the Twin Cities.

> Would it not [asked the editor], be a fitting acknowledgment by the Republicans of this district, of the justice due—and refused—in state matters, to these western counties, by giving the congressman to the west? We are no stickler for locality, but when the west, that has to do the electing and is today in part disfranchised in the state legislature, is able to present a candidate who is in every respect equal to the best men that have been proposed in Hennepin and Ramsey counties, we believe they are deserving of consideration in the convention.
>
> They have just such a man—and that man is Knute Nelson of Alexandria. Indeed, we think that it would take about four dozen of some of the pompous and fluffy down-country candidates (boiled down to get rid of the superfluous grease and wind) to make such a man as Knute Nelson. Others there are who are able enough. There is no particle of bosh or inflation about Mr. Nelson, which is what can be said of few politicians. A hard-working man, a close student,

a keen observer of things, a thorough lawyer, a ready and forcible debater, a fearless advocate of what he believes to be right, of correct principles and habits throughout, a man of the common people and thoroughly in sympathy with them as against rings and monopolies, a square, honest man—that's what Knute Nelson is.

No other man in the district can command the great Republican vote of the western counties that he can, for the people know him—he is their representative in the fullest sense.

That was high praise, indeed, showing that the young Norwegian immigrant had in a few short years made a profound impression upon the people of the Park Region. It is interesting to observe how correctly the editor judged Knute Nelson's character and peculiar elements of strength at that early stage of his career.

Commenting on this eulogy, the Minneapolis Evening Mail remarked that the "district might certainly go farther and fare worse, and what the Journal says of Knute Nelson is eminently true."

The Republican convention of the third district was held at St. Paul, July 19.

The editor of the Alexandria Post took note of this and in his issue of July 14 said:

The two candidates most prominently before the people are Senator Levi Butler of Minneapolis and Dr. Stewart of St. Paul. Our own senator, Hon. Knute Nelson, is the first choice of all the northwestern part of the district, and his supporters, if not a majority in the convention, at least hold a balance of power.

When the convention slate is made up, if Mr. Nelson is not clearly in the majority, the friends of one of the other candidates may, and very probably will, in order to defeat a rival, unite with the friends of Nelson and thereby secure his nomination. Mr. Nelson would be acceptable throughout the entire district, while the candidates below are obnoxious in either the one or the other of the great cities.

On the morning of the convention day, the old St. Paul Pioneer, in reviewing the situation, designated the two Twin City candidates as the leaders in the race, and then slipped in this interesting statement:

Then there was said to be a small delegation of delegates—something like a dozen and a half of them—who were going to stand up for Hon. Knute Nelson, state senator from Douglas county, and as able, honest and capable a gentleman as the third district contains, but if he cannot make the riffle, it is said his friends will accept Dr. Stewart as their second choice.

The delegates from Douglas county were F. Von Baumbach, C. F. Simms and Mr. Nelson himself. He was placed in nomination by Mr. McCrea of Wadena. The first ballot stood: Doctor Stewart, fifty-four votes; Doctor Butler, thirty; Knute Nelson, sixteen; W. W. McClure of Stillwater, eight.

So Doctor Stewart was nominated. St. Paul had triumphed over Minneapolis in their biennial bout in the political arena. However, the city up the river evened up the score two years later, when W. D. Washburn displaced Doctor Stewart in the halls of congress.

Vacation Started Trouble

Soon after the convention mysterious things began to happen.

"Hon. Knute Nelson," recorded the faithful editor of the Post, August 25, 1876, "worn down by constant labor, has found it necessary to rest for several months to regain his impaired health. He has gone back to the old homestead in Wisconsin, where, with his parents and friends, he will probably remain until October."

Almost coincident with his departure came a representative of Budstikken, the leading Norwegian newspaper of Minnesota, with a message to the people of Alexandria that Senator Nelson had been unfairly treated in the Republican convention, that "the Norwegians had been insulted," and that the right thing to do for Mr. Nelson's friends and the Norwegians was to resent the crooked conduct of the Republican politicians and the insult to the Norwegians by rallying to the support of W. W. McNair, the Democratic candidate.

The emissary let it be known that Knute Nelson felt grievously hurt and, while he might not say it openly, would shed no tears if Doctor Stewart were defeated and the Republican politicians that ran the convention rebuked.

All this created much excitement in the village. The staunch Republican editor of the Post was torn by conflicting emotions.

This we believe to be an unmitigated lie [he exclaimed in his next issue]. Our high regard for Mr. Nelson, believing him to be an earnest and honest and consistent and frank Republican and a high-souled and chivalrous patriot, force us to the emphatic denial of the base insinuation.

Until Mr. Nelson himself, openly and publicly, declares for the Democratic congressman, every true friend of his will deny this charge of treason brought against him.

If it should transpire that he has so fully identified himself with the Democrats as to support their candidate for congress, then we, with all true Republicans, will help to bury him deep in a political grave and will lament his untimely suicide and will honor his memory for the good he did in his brief lifetime.

The worst of it all was that Nelson was even farther away than Sheridan, when that general was so badly needed at the battle of Winchester, and all that good and true Republicans in Alexandria could do was to fervently deny the "base insinuation," without being able to back up the denial with proof.

There was one man who could have saved them from this dilemma—Lars K. Aaker—but for some reason he held his peace. He had received a letter from Senator Nelson, written from St. Paul a few days before he left for Wisconsin, which says that "at the request of Doctor Stewart he had gone to Minneapolis to see Budstikken.

"Washburn, Pillsbury and myself conferred with Johnson of the Budstikken, to get him into the traces, but nothing could be done. McNair had fixed him. We must do what we can for Doctor Stewart."

It was not until October 13 that Mr. Aaker made this letter public. When Senator Nelson came back to Alexandria he found so much uneasiness over the many reports and rumors, which had been circulated, that he deemed it necessary to make a statement in the Post.

On my return home after an absence of seven weeks [he wrote], I learn with surprise that my absence has been ascribed in some quarters to an arrangement on my part with Mr. McNair, or his friends, to remain absent in order to give credence and force to the report that I, and through me, the Norwegians, had been badly used at our congressional convention, and hence, by the way of revenge, we desire the election of Mr. McNair.

Whoever has had this impression as to my absence has been in error and has done injustice both to Mr. McNair and myself—to

Mr. McNair because neither he nor any of his friends have ever requested, hinted or suggested that I in any way, either directly or indirectly, aid or further his election—to myself, because I never had any intention other than as a Republican loyally to support and further the election of Dr. Stewart, and because, being in bad health, I sought what is often of greater importance than medicines, a little rest.

It never entered my head that during my absence one side would use me for a rallying cry in some quarters, while the other side would look upon me as a Judas Iscariot.

While I look upon the right of seven admitted delegates from Becker, Clay, Big Stone and Pembina as questionable, I never felt or intimated that either I or the Scandinavians had any cause for that reason to bolt, because I have often seen as questionable proceedings in conventions where none but pure Americans figured as candidates, and because I am satisfied that no one in the convention had any ill will or objection to me on the score that I happened to be a Norwegian born. The bitterest opponents of mine in that convention were Norwegians, while some of my most ardent friends were Americans and Germans.

The Republicans of the 39th senatorial district, having nominated me for their senatorial candidate, I avail myself of this opportunity to say that while I did not seek the nomination, I thank the convention and the people for the honor conferred and, if elected, will strive to represent the district to the best of my ability.

Mr. Nelson had been nominated at the Republican district convention at Glenwood, September 30. He had sent word to his friend, Mr. Aaker, that he did not wish the nomination, but would accept it if tendered him.

His name was presented to the delegates by Fred Von Baumbach on behalf of Douglas county. There were other candidates, and the informal ballot stood: Mr. Nelson, eleven votes; M. A. Wollan, nine votes, and Doctor Lewis, seven votes. The second formal ballot gave Nelson a large majority and his nomination was made unanimous.

There was no opposing candidate in the election.

Biding His Time

Though Mr. Nelson did not obtain the nomination for congressman in 1876, there can be little doubt that his political prestige was enhanced and his name became associated with the office of national representative. It is safe to assume that he was not confident of winning

the nomination, but, as the Post expressed it, felt that his friends might hold the balance of power and land him the honor, in case of a deadlock between the Twin City candidates.

As it turned out, he did not become a candidate for congressman or any other elective office for several years. He was biding his time.

When his second term in the state senate expired he appeared before the convention and positively declined to accept a renomination, for two reasons: It was but just that some other man, from another county, should fill the office, and his own private business, too long neglected, needed his attention.

For four years he had been senator, said he, and had done the best he could in the interests of his constituents and the commonwealth. All were familiar with his record and, in the aggregate, he knew that his course had been approved. Mutual charity had been exercised and the people had learned to bear and forbear. Some who had at times opposed him, had in the end come to his support. For the honors conferred upon him and for their approval of his acts, he felt under great obligation to the people and to them returned his sincerest thanks.

He hoped the same cordial support, which he had received, would be extended to the nominee of the convention. He had no doubt such would be the case, but urged the Republicans to be wide awake in the congressional contest and see that no votes were lost to Mr. Washburn through the greenback delusions and sophistries of Mr. Donnelly.

That was a very shrewd and effective line of talk and was received with "enthusiastic applause," said the Post.

A Sample of Early Oratory

Eighteen hundred and seventy-six was the centennial year of our national independence, and the citizens of Alexandria planned a large Fourth of July celebration with Knute Nelson as "orator of the day." He was then thirty-three years old, and the address he delivered

is doubtless the most carefully prepared oration of his early life. It was printed in full in the Post, which describes it as "unimpassioned," but "earnest, eloquent, able, worthy of the orator."

The language is not so simple and unaffected as that of Senator Nelson's speeches in his maturer years, but is worthy of praise, as is also the thought conveyed. Perhaps the best sentence is this: "We are strong because we are an educated and enlightened people, because we oftener resort to logic than the sword to maintain our faith, and because we cherish liberty and abhor oppression."

A striking passage, wherein he strikes a high note and voices broad and noble sentiments, is the paragraph in which he pleads for the recognition of all that took part in the great struggle:

> Nor will we single out any of those brave men who took part in the struggle and laud them above the rest. The humblest man in that band of patriots, who performed his duty, humble though it might be, did that which God gave him to do, contributed his widow's mite, and deserves our gratitude and admiration equally with the highest. History, it is true, as is its fashion, has singled out some and made them more prominent than the rest, but to us on this one hundredth birthday, they are all equally near and dear—all Washingtons, Jeffersons and Franklins. They were all, great and small, the scaffolding of our greatness and eminence.

In saying this, the speaker may have had in mind his own services in the Civil war as a common soldier. He knew by personal experience what the "humblest man in that band of patriots" suffered and endured. In the senate of the United States he struck the same key in his admirable, impromptu speeches coming straight from the heart, in praise and defense of the common soldier.

In the peroration of his centennial address the young orator is more poetic and rhetorical than was his wont, and the solemnity of both thought and language is rather striking:

> Truly we have this day cause to rejoice, but in rejoicing let us not forget how many drops of blood have been spilt, how many tears have been shed, and how many hearts have ached, that this republic

might live and have life everlasting. Hallowed be the memory of the fathers!

The republic, though 100 years of age, is still in the days of its childhood and hath need, as much as ever, of our care and vigilance. Then, and before we part, the occasion and mood being upon us, let us dedicate our lives anew, to the task of maintaining, and handing down to our posterity, this government, as perfect and good, as the same has been handed down unto us, and thus we give reverence to the departed dead, while untold generations following will call us blessed.

> Let us have love for our land as if she were our daughter;
> Her pipes in peace, her tomahawks in wars;
> Hatred to tyrants and the wrongs they foster;
> Pride in our well earned freedom and our stars.

The "Brass Kettle" Campaign

In 1878, Senator Nelson was chairman of the Republican convention of the Third congressional district, held at the Academy of Music in Minneapolis. The fight for the nomination was between Doctor J. H. Stewart of St. Paul, the successful candidate in 1876, and W. D. Washburn of Minneapolis.

It was charged by the friends of Doctor Stewart that the Minneapolis politicians took unfair advantage of the congressman by calling the convention early in the summer while he was attending to his duties at Washington and unable to look after his political interests at home. Mr. Washburn scored an easy victory, but in the campaign that followed encountered fierce opposition in the person of the famous and warlike Ignatius Donnelly, who was nominated by the Democrats.

This was the famous and historic "Brass Kettle" campaign, so called because of the references on the stump to the two-quart brass kettle or measure used by buyers for grading wheat. Mr. Donnelly waged a tremendous campaign, coming up to the city limits of Minneapolis with a majority, but the Mill City gave Washburn the election.

Donnelly contested, making all sorts of accusations against his successful opponent, but the house turned a deaf ear, as both branches of congress usually do in such cases.

Mr. Washburn served three terms in the national house, being Mr. Nelson's colleague from 1883 to 1885. The relations between the two were very cordial, and Mr. Nelson was among Mr. Washburn's most active supporters in the fight against Ignatius Donnelly. The brilliant Irishman had many political animosities, but of all Minnesota politicians he hated W. D. Washburn the most, so, although he had no love for Nelson, the "Little Norwegian's" victory over "that iceberg" (as he called Washburn) in 1895 gave him intense satisfaction.

Was Presidential Elector

In the campaign of 1880, Mr. Nelson was named as one of Minnesota's five presidential electors. This gave him further prestige among the Republicans of the state, and valuable publicity, for in those days it was customary for party organs to print at the top of their editorial columns the names of the presidential electors, along with the names of the candidates for president and vice president. James A. Garfield was the Republican candidate for president, John S. Pillsbury was aspiring for a third term as governor, and Nelson's trusted friend, Lars K. Aaker, was the Republican nominee for state senator in the home district.

The future governor was arguing important cases before juries, district judges and the state supreme court; was looking after his farm and bossing the hired man, was making Republican speeches here and there in northern Minnesota, and was still biding his time.

Chapter VIII

THE HISTORIC KINDRED-NELSON CAMPAIGN

When Minnesota became a state in 1858 it had two representatives in congress. The congressional apportionment of 1872 increased the number to three and, on the basis of the federal census of 1880, the young state was allotted five representatives in the apportionment of 1881. Douglas county was put in the Fifth congressional district, along with twenty-eight other counties north of the Twin Cities. A line from Big Stone City on the western border of the state, through St. Cloud to Wisconsin, formed the south boundary of the vast district.

In these twenty-nine counties lived many ambitious politicians, who felt that the time had arrived for their fellow citizens to send them to congress. There was Charles H. Graves, Duluth, former state senator, who rose to prominence in after years as United States minister to Sweden. Another was Charles A. Gilman, St. Cloud, lieutenant governor and former speaker of the house—a politician of large experience.

Others were Andrew McCrea, Perham, and H. G. Page, Fergus Falls, both former state senators from Otter Tail county; G. Benedict, Sauk Rapids, Charles F. Kindred, Brainerd, and Solon G. Comstock, Moorhead. Before the campaign really warmed up, Comstock, Benedict, Page and McCrea withdrew. In the beginning it was assumed that Mr. Gilman would be the Republican nominee, as he was easily the best known of all the candidates. Indeed, it was noised about that the district had been shaped for his special benefit.

As we have seen, Knute Nelson was a candidate for the Republican nomination in the old Third district in 1876, but made no effort to win the honor in 1878 or 1880, feeling, no doubt, that the time was not yet ripe. Immediately after the apportionment of 1881, however,

his friends urged him to enter the race. And he lent a willing ear. He realized that the elimination of the Twin Cities gave him a better chance in the convention, and he knew that if he did not grasp the honor then, another opportunity might not present itself in years. The man elected in 1882 would be sure to seek re-election and, being in possession of the office, with an army of postmasters and other appointees at his beck and call, would probably be invincible against new aspirants.

Knute Nelson's shrewdness now came to the surface. He was no longer a novice at the political game—not like the unsophisticated youth who tried to run away from the Token Creek convention of 1867. He fully appreciated the importance of the Scandinavian vote in the new district and knew that if the Scandinavians would unite upon him his strength in the convention would be formidable. And the way he went about the capture of the Scandinavian vote showed rare astuteness. "No, I am not enough of a fox to be a preacher," he had remarked in fun as a boy of sixteen or seventeen. But he had ample sagacity for any calling.

On November 24, 1881, he broached his candidacy to Luth Jaeger, Minneapolis, editor of Budstikken, the influential Norwegian newspaper. He suggested that the time had come for the election of a Norwegian to the office of congressman in northern Minnesota, where the Norwegians were so numerous and so loyal to the Republican party. He shrewdly realized that some of the other Norwegian politicians in the district would be jealous and would try to block his nomination unless it could be made to appear that he became a candidate at the request of the Norwegian voters.

> While the rank and file of the Norwegians would no doubt stand by me [he wrote], it would be a question whether I could rely on the politicians—all of them. He realized there were "so many conflicting interests and so much petty jealousy among our politicians . . . Now, I should be very glad to get your views and advice in this matter, and would also like to know whether, in case I become a candidate, the Budstikken would support me. I feel that in this district, we are entitled to a Norwegian and in case we were all united, we could no doubt get our man. Now, my platform is this: If the

Norwegians cannot unite on me, I am willing to go in and do my best for any other Norwegian, whom our people would agree on, for I have no claims beyond many others. Now, would it not be a good plan for Budstikken to agitate this subject from the Norwegian standpoint in its general aspects, without in the first instance supporting any particular candidate? I am satisfied it is none too early, as several American candidates are already setting up their pins."

Of course, this letter was to be considered strictly confidential, and so was Mr. Jaeger's reply. It should be stated here that the astute politician had prepared the way for such a letter as this. In April of the preceding year, in reply to a letter from Mr. Jaeger asking Mr. Nelson's influence in behalf of a Mr. Janson, who was seeking a professorship at the University of Minnesota, the future senator had heartily endorsed the idea of establishing a Scandinavian professorship and had deplored the fact that there was no Norwegian on the board of regents or on the governing board of other state educational institutions. He had suggested to the governor the appointment of a Norwegian on the board of regents—indeed, he had even asked for the appointment himself.

As was to be expected, Mr. Jaeger wrote a very favorable letter in reply to the candidate's "feeler." He heartily agreed with Mr. Nelson that the Norwegians of northern Minnesota ought to have a congressman of their own nationality and that he believed the "Little Norwegian" of Alexandria was the man for the place. So, on December 10, the candidate thanked Mr. Jaeger very warmly and again shrewdly cautioned against putting him forward as yet, but "to quietly agitate the subject . . . . to get our people awake to the idea and then, when ripe, bring them to the particular man or men. However, consider this but a suggestion, and pursue such a course as your judgment, experience and prudence dictate, for I know you are discreet and will make no mistake."

Perfectly planned, perfectly stated! The deft flattery of Mr. Jaeger was very effective and in excellent taste.

The Office Seeking the Man

The astute politician gave a great deal of attention to the manner in which his candidacy should be formally brought before the Scandinavians of the district. He exchanged several letters on this subject with Mr. Jaeger, and it was finally decided that the Budstikken should ask Mr. Nelson if he would be a candidate and that he should come back with a formal announcement.

"In reply permit me," ran the candidate's letter, "to say that if the people of this district see fit and proper to nominate me and elect me for this important office, it would be an honor and mark of confidence that I could but highly appreciate, and that I would endeavor to serve my constituents in this office to the best of my ability and judgment and that I would strive 'to do right as God gives me to see the right.' "

Thus, in a way, it was made to appear that the office sought the man, but the correspondence that passed between the candidate and the editor proves that Mr. Nelson did some clever coaching and steering, so that the office would not take the wrong road and land in the arms of the wrong man. The future congressman wrote his announcement in English, leaving Mr. Jaeger to "make a free translation of it" into Norwegian. "My great aim," said a personal note accompanying the announcement, "has been not to say too much, and if it still needs pruning, don't hesitate in the least to prune."

On May 11, 1882, Mr. Nelson again addressed his friend Jaeger a letter in which he gives further proof of his sagacity. "The campaign," said he, "is progressing finely. The enemy at present is Kindred's barrel. He scatters his money freely and claims that a large portion of the Norwegians are purchaseable. Touch this matter up in your paper in such a way as to make the people sensitive on this point and feel that it is odious and an insignia of purchase to be found in the Kindred ranks."

In a subsequent letter the same point is again mentioned and emphasized with much earnestness.

Only Norwegian Candidate

Mr. Nelson was the only Norwegian or Scandinavian to enter the race and his candidacy was launched under very favorable auspices. His countrymen rallied to his support almost to a man, as was shown when the caucuses were held in the heavy Scandinavian precincts. In Douglas, Grant, Pope, Otter Tail, Clay, Polk, Norman and other counties, in which the Norwegians and the Swedes dominated, or were the balance of power, Nelson became the leading candidate at the very outset, and if one of his rivals had not resorted to what may be designated as uncivilized political warfare, the "Little Norwegian," as he became known in the course of the campaign, would have had the solid support of all those counties in the convention—and they had the largest delegations.

It should be stated, however, that by no means all of the leading Scandinavians were backers of the Nelson candidacy. Such men as Soren Listoe, register of the United States land office at Fergus Falls, and Captain A. A. Brown, Alexandria, former state senator, were bitter in their animosity, and left no stone unturned to defeat Mr. Nelson. Others of lesser note were equally antagonistic; indeed, they were more venomous and personal in their attacks than Nelson's non-Norwegian opponents. And they were the ones whom Nelson found it hardest to forgive in after years.

Charles F. Kindred's Methods

Some men live in history not by virtue of their own greatness, but because their names were linked with great men. Charles F. Kindred lives in the political annals of Minnesota because he was pitted against Knute Nelson in the most acrimonious, most dramatic campaign in the history of the state. He had held no political office in the state and had taken no prominent part in politics, unless his participation in the national Republican convention of 1880, as a delegate from the Third congressional district, be deemed an instance of political prominence. To that convention he was sent as a supporter

of Minnesota's favorite son, the distinguished William Windom, but soon took his place in Grant's solid phalanx of 305—for which he was roundly denounced by the press of the state.

But he had achieved prominence in another way. He had come from the state of Pennsylvania ten years before to serve as chief clerk in the land department of the Northern Pacific railroad. The land department had its headquarters at Brainerd, where Mr. Kindred soon became known for a variety of reasons. The office in which he was employed had complete control of the vast land holdings of the company.

It was a wonderful place for a man of Kindred's type to make money [says Elmer E. Adams in his interesting sory of the Kindred-Nelson campaign, read before the Minnesota Historical Society]. The price of these lands was from $3 to $10 per acre and that included some of the choicest land in Minnesota and North Dakota. According to the developments which came out during the congressional campaign, Kindred utilized every method of profiting at the expense of the company, which he was serving, and of the people, who were buying its lands. At that time, these lands could be paid for in preferred stock of the Northern Pacific Railway Company, and this stock could be purchased at 15 cents on the dollar. Therefore, a settler buying a quarter section of land at $5.00 per acre, would pay the company $800.00 for it, but he could go out and buy $800.00 worth of preferred stock of the company for $120 and turn this in payment of the land.

It was the practice of Kindred, when a settler came for the purpose of buying a section or quarter section of land, to go out and purchase the preferred stock and turn this into the company, either taking the settler's money, if he had it, or taking a mortgage drawing a good rate of interest upon the land for the full amount which the Northern Pacific asked for it. In this way, he was able to enrich himself very fast.

The year before he became a candidate for congress, his manipulations of the company's business had become so flagrant that a committee of the Northern Pacific directors was appointed to investigate Kindred's acts and make their report to the board of directors, and after it was published, it was made the basis of a lawsuit. This suit, although it was afterwards compromised, resulted in Kindred's paying back to the Northern Pacific a large amount of money, stated to be about $75,000, although it might have been very much more.

In any event, during the time that he was acting as chief clerk, he is said to have accumulated a fortune of a quarter of a million dollars, which meant a great deal of money in those days, and he also had very large holdings of very choice lands. He had, at this time, opened up a very large and extensive stock farm near Valley

City, and carried on demonstration work, which was very much talked of in those days as showing his interest in agriculture.

Mr. Kindred made known his congressional aspirations soon after the Fifth congressional district was formed, and it was not long before the other candidates realized that in him they had a dangerous opponent—not because he had an extensive acquaintance throughout the great district, not because he could point to a record of public service that gave him prestige or popularity, but because of the bold, reckless and unscrupulous methods he adopted in the prosecution of his campaign. His early political training had been received in Pennsylvania, then noted for its unsavory political practices. He had learned that money "talks" in politics as well as business and, as he had acquired a large fortune in a very easy fashion, he showed his willingness to use it freely. As a consequence, all of the "heelers" were soon in his employ.

From Brainerd went forth his chief lieutenants to all parts of the district, and wherever they appeared liquor flowed freely and Kindred sentiment ran high in the saloons and the livery stables, the most popular gathering places of the "sports" and the "bums." Newspaper editors were offered substantial reward for support of Mr. Kindred, and in many villages and cities new papers were established after the efforts of Kindred's agents to enlist the support of existing journals had proved unavailing.

There are mutterings of discontent from the fifth congressional district [declared the good Republican St. Paul Dispatch, in May.] The district is overwhelmingly Republican. A nomination from a united and harmonious party is equivalent to an election. But there is no room for a split or bolt. The complaint comes to us from widely different quarters that illegitimate means are being used by one of the candidates; that money is being freely spent to buy up newspapers, and that some "heathen Chinee" tricks, in the way of springing calls for county conventions, etc., are being contemplated.

The Normanna Banner, a Norwegian newspaper at Fergus Falls, charged early in June that Kindred's own friends "admit the expenditure of $5,000 in Norman

county and a like amount in Clay, while $10,000 is modestly named as the sum expended in Becker. We know whereof we speak and can bring proof."

Kindred's "Military Heroes"

After the Civil war there were all sorts of captains, majors and colonels in politics—some of them genuine, but others of the counterfeit variety. Included in the ranks of the Kindred cohorts were many such—also a few "judges." The Fergus Falls Journal called attention to this. "We are not disposed to be unjust to Mr. Kindred," said its hard-hitting editor, "but when we see buzzard politicians flying around the country, loitering about the seats of political influence, and being introduced as Colonel This, Major That and Judge So-and-So—it being well understood that they are emissaries of Mr. Kindred—we shall not hesitate to warn the people against them. Where the buzzards are gathered together there the carcass may be found."

Foremost of all the Kindred commanders was Colonel C. B. Sleeper, Brainerd. Judging by the northern Minnesota newspapers of 1882, he must have been a wonderful man. He was here, there and everywhere almost at the same time. It was before the day of airplanes, but Colonel Sleeper—like A. C. Townley in 1920—must have flown from county to county on the wings of the wind. And wherever he appeared there was "something doing."

He did not overlook Alexandria and Douglas county in his operations. Both the Post and the News blew fierce blasts of defiance and warning after his first visit there early in June. "Forthwith two mercenaries . . . . devoid of principle, sprang forth to his service, eager to do his bidding, and have sought by all means . . . . to create a Kindred ripple, traveling over the county and the country, spending the money of their chief. . . . The intelligent voters of Douglas county are too manly to be won or swerved by such ignoble emissaries. . . . Bought delegations and bolting minorities are unstable foundations for corrupt manipulators. Against this

iniquity Mr. Nelson and his friends present only the impregnable front of disingenuousness, honesty and solid merit." Thus roared the Post.

Snap Caucuses and Bolting Delegates

But what was the significance of the above references to "Heathen Chinee" tricks in the way of springing calls for county conventions," and "bolting minorities"? The late H. P. Hall, keen witted political reporter and observer, who "covered" this campaign for the St. Paul Globe, has given a very clear and unbiased account of these things in his "Observations," published in 1904, after the feelings and passions of the conflict had died down. The Globe was a strong pro-Kindred and anti-Nelson organ, and Mr. Hall's reports of the campaign in 1882 were highly colored, but when he wrote his "Observations," he aimed to be fair and impartial.

At first [he said], the county conventions called to send delegates to the district convention at Detroit were conducted with some degree of fairness, though in every case the contest would be a sharp one. After one or two conventions had split and sent double delegations, a spirit of recklessness broke out, and whichever side rightfully had control of the county convention, the other proceeded to make an excuse for a split and send a contesting delegation.

There was absolutely no attempt to be fair in this contest for the congressional nomination. This statement applies to both the Nelson and Kindred forces, but a good deal more to the Kindred than to the Nelson men, because Nelson was really stronger and had a more substantial backing than Kindred. Kindred in reality had little backing but his money, and it was the deliberate plan, whenever Nelson had carried a county, for the Kindred men to come in and hold another convention, appointing a double delegation. Of course, this bore the usual fruit of a split in the convention, and if the Scandinavian element had not been so enormously strong in northern Minnesota, it would have resulted in Knute Nelson's defeat as well as Kindred's. As it was, Nelson proved invincible, and not only won in that campaign, but went on to win in the future, until he had achieved national renown.

In some cases an extra convention was held without any pretense of authority, and it was very evident that Nelson and Kindred, or their friends, intended to make a double district convention. The result was that when the convention was due to meet, there were only eighteen out of twenty-nine counties which could lay any claim to being "regular."

"Regularity" meant a great deal more in the early eighties than it does now in Minnesota. It was a serious matter for a politician not to abide by the result of a caucus or a convention. A "bolter" was looked upon as the twin brother of a traitor.

The first serious trouble occurred in Norman county. That was strong Nelson territory, but Kindred had obtained the support of Fred Puhler, a very resourceful politician, who believed that the end justified the means in the pending contest. He was chairman of the Republican county committee and, as such, had the power to call the county convention at his own pleasure. On May 25 he formally issued the call, but did not have it published in a newspaper until the day before the convention was to be held—namely, at Ada, June 1.

> He had hired all the teams in Ada to prevent the Nelson men from reaching the outside towns, except on foot [says Mr. Adams.] It is charged that he hired teams and sent men out to get up snap caucuses for Kindred, and Kindred, himself, came to Ada to help along the work. There were no automobiles in those days and no telephones, and it is said that what teams they did not need, they paid to have kept in the barns to prevent the Nelson men from getting around. Notwithstanding this sharp practice, out of forty-three delegates to the convention, Nelson had twenty-eight uncontested, Kindred had seven, and eight were contested between Nelson and Kindred. Nelson thus had a majority of all the delegates.
>
> In view of the fact that the Nelson men were very green in political methods, they held a regular rehearsal convention in the forenoon before the time for the regular convention and went through all the motions and proceedings of organizing, so that they would know how to do it when the convention met in the afternoon. . . . . As soon as the convention was called to order, the Nelson men nominated a chairman, and Puhler refused to put the motion. One of his own crowd nominated a Kindred man, and Puhler put the motion and declared it carried. In the meantime, one of the Nelson delegates put the motion for the nomination of the Nelson man and he was declared elected and took the chair. Puhler and his men then left the hall and elected a delegation to Detroit. The Nelson men then completed the work of their convention.

Thus the trouble began and the warm month of June was made still hotter by the fierce invectives which flew thick and fast as snap caucuses were called, as county conventions split, each faction sending a separate delegation to the district convention, and as the newspapers

of the district and some of the St. Paul and Minneapolis dailies joined in the chorus of protests, denunciation and recrimination.

Nelson's Shrewd Coaching

Let no one suppose that while Kindred and his brigade were busy all over the district, "tilting the 'barl,' " buying up newspapers and rushing the ball with a vengeance, Knute Nelson was devoting all of his time to the practice of law and looking after the farm at Alexandria. Both the practice and the farm would have suffered seriously had it not been for Nelson's efficient law partner, and for Mrs. Nelson's equally efficient supervision of the hired men at home.

He visited many of the counties, conferring with his supporters and coaching his lieutenants. He carried on a very extensive correspondence and, as he had no stenographer, wrote all of his letters with his own hand. He was an excellent penman, as well as a fluent writer, and the words in these campaign letters, some of which have been preserved, stand out strong and clear, in rather large letters. Even to the very end of his life he wrote many confidential letters to personal friends with his own hand. His hand-writing toward the last was not so good. The letters did not stand out so large, so firm, so clear, but were quite legible.

The instructions that Nelson sent to his lieutenants show his remarkable skill as a political manager and strategist.

Here is a letter, written to Alexander Running, auditor of Norman county, soon after the Detroit convention:

Dear Sir: It is of the utmost importance that our friends throughout the district thoroughly organize as soon as may be to be fully prepared for effective action on election day.

To this end, I would advise and recommend that the following steps for organization be immediately undertaken, viz.:

That you, and two good men, to be by you selected, constitute yourselves and act as a county campaign committee to have charge and supervision of the campaign in your county.

That you at once appoint a subcommittee of three reliable and

trustworthy men for each town, city or village in your county, to take charge of and look after the campaign in such precinct.

That these subcommittees proceed as soon as practicable to make a canvass and list of all Republican voters within their respective precincts, putting the names of all voters on the list, and classifying them as "Nelson," "Kindred" or "doubtful." These lists should be returned to the chairman of the county committee and, after being by him examined, should be sent to Hon. C. A. Gilman, St. Cloud, or the subscriber at Alexandria, Minnesota.

The object of this canvass and these lists is, first, to ascertain our strength and the total aggregate of the vote; second, to learn where work is most needed and where to labor.

Those termed "doubtful," being such as have not fully made up their minds, should especially be labored with in time, as well as all Democrats.

Then it is of the utmost importance that you from time to time send short reports of how the campaign progresses by letter or telegram to the Pioneer Press and Minneapolis Tribune. The object of this is to keep our side well before the public in the telegraphic and news columns of these papers. For instance, a short dispatch saying: "The feeling here is all for Nelson. Kindred seems to have no followers. His action at Detroit disgusted everybody," would oftentimes do much good. These papers will publish these reports, if they are brief, curt and to the point. Kindred will have lots of such reports and we must not be behindhand. . . . . .

Be kind enough to consider this as strictly confidential.

Candidate Nelson was alert to everything that counts in a campaign. In that respect few have equalled him. It is probable that he and La Follette were, above all others, the master politicians of the entire northwest. Letters, similar to the one above, followed from time to time to his chief lieutenants, giving them valuable pointers and stimulating them to continued effort. He carried a notebook in his pocket, in which he wrote down the names of workers in various counties, to whom he should write and to whom campaign literature should be sent. There were also memoranda of campaign speeches, which he expected to deliver, names of county and precinct committees and other information of importance. This notebook shows that he held thirty political meetings in October and the first days in November.

Here is another letter to Mr. Running of a later date, which throws interesting light on the candidate's activity and methods:

Dear Sir: Your favor of August 31 received. Your report from the chairman of the county committee is splendid. If you can hold the ground you have got, nothing can be better, and you will be among the banner Nelson counties. I was on a flying trip following up Kindred the other day. Saw you through the car window, but had not time to stop. Look out for sharp tricks. Kindred, no doubt, will attempt to buy up a leading man in each town. Look out for W——— of Fargo. He has sold out to Kindred. You may expect me some time this month at your place certain.

The "Double-Headed" Detroit Convention

The congressional committee, appointed by the Republican State Central committee, to supervise the campaign and arrange for the district convention was composed of nine men: Colonel George H. Johnston, Detroit, chairman; former Lieutenant Governor Barto, Sauk Center; S. G. Comstock, Moorhead; Judge Reuben Reynolds, Crookston; Senator Lars K. Aaker, Alexandria; A. C. Hatch, Battle Lake; H. C. Kendall, Duluth; Colonel C. B. Sleeper, Brainerd, and F. C. Tuttle, Ortonville. A majority of these men were anti-Kindred, but the chairman, who had most power, was a Kindred partisan, though pretending friendship for Nelson. On account of the drastic methods employed by the Brainerd candidate, the friends of Nelson, Gilman and Graves, made common cause against him, and when the time for the convention drew near, the campaign had resolved itself into a fight of Kindred against the field. Where to hold the convention was a matter of great importance. The Kindred partisans schemed to capture it for Brainerd, where they could bring all sorts of pressure to bear upon the delegates, but in this they were shrewdly outwitted. The Nelson men on the committee favored Fergus Falls, a Nelson stronghold, but they feared that Colonel Johnston, who had two votes (his own and that of an absent member), would support Brainerd, so they proposed Detroit, the chairman's home town, which he was almost compelled to accept, as the Detroit people were keen for the gathering, knowing that it would be a memorable event, with hundreds, if not thousands, of visitors on hand. The call for the convention directed

it to assemble at Bowman's hall or Opera house, at one p. m., on the twelfth of July.

By this time the interest of the entire state, and to some extent of the country, centered upon the Kindred-Nelson contest. All of the St. Paul and Minneapolis dailies had been carrying long reports of the developments in the struggle, and large eastern newspapers had published numerous special dispatches reviewing the situation. When the convention met, more than twenty special correspondents were at Detroit to tell an expectant world the news. It was the biggest event of the day in the eyes of all St. Paul and Minneapolis editors. Their papers printed from three to eight columns on the convention. The most vivid and lurid story was that of the St. Paul Globe, written by H. P. Hall. The heading was "The Bloody Fifth," and from that time on the district bore that sensational name.

So famous had the fierce struggle become that the victor was bound to become an outstanding figure in the politics of the state. Thus did the fates weave the web of destiny. In November, 1882, Knute Nelson, the penniless Norwegian immigrant boy of 1849, had become the "Little Giant of Alexandria."

While the contest had resolved itself into a fight of Kindred against the field, it would be almost equally true to say that it had become a fierce duel between two men—Nelson and Kindred. Graves and Gilman had been relegated to the sidelines. Everybody realized that the nominee, if the convention hung together, would be either the sturdy little Norwegian or the large, handsome, dashing cavalier from Brainerd. In May the Fergus Falls Journal sarcastically described Kindred as "that healthy, robust and energetic young American, with the eye of an eagle and the head of a Jove."

The Tent on the Green

In 1882 Detroit was a village of about 1,500 people with only one hotel of any consequence. How to house the visitors that would flock to attend the convention was a problem. Kindred, with his money, was fore-

handed. Long before the big day, he hired every room in the principal hotel except one; that was reserved for Knute Nelson by the proprietor, a Civil war comrade.

The friends of Nelson brought to the village a large tent, which they erected on a vacant plot, not far from the convention hall. They thought it might serve two purposes—as a camping place for houseless delegates and other friends; as a convention hall, if it became necessary to hold a convention outside of Bowman's Opera house. It served both purposes.

More than 500 people poured into Detroit the day before the convention assembled and over 1,000 the next day.

The train over the Northern Pacific, which reached here this morning, composed of five sleepers and half a dozen day coaches, was literally packed, [read The Minneapolis Tribune's wire story of July 11.] Three sleepers came through from Minneapolis. The others, from Duluth, were attached at Brainerd, one being occupied by the Graves men, the other by Kindred's backers and his bolting delegation from St. Louis county. Brainerd filled three coaches, Kindred himself and Sleeper, his chief of staff, being among the number. Gilman came through from Minneapolis. Asa Barto came on board at St. Cloud. The down train at ten o'clock brought Knute Nelson. S. G. Comstock, who is pointed out as a possible dark horse, came in by the same train from Moorhead. Already there are 500 strangers in Detroit. Everybody is good natured, but everybody is very much in earnest. There is no talk of compromise as a possibility. There will be no olive branch business.

Nelson, Graves and Gilman held a conference with a view to reaching an agreement as to the best method of dealing with the contested delegations.

The trains from east and west this morning [telegraphed the Tribune representative from the scene of action, July 12], brought the missing delegates and a large number of backers of the several candidates. Another brass band, making the fourth here, came in from Fargo, with 100 more Kindred strikers. The weather is damp and chilly and overcoats and rubber coats are in better demand than supply. There are several saloons in town and in the absence of heavy wraps much warmth is taken inwardly.

During the forenoon the diplomats of the opposing factions were busy, but nothing was accomplished. Various propositions were made to the Kindredites, but in every instance they were rejected. They would listen to nothing short of an absolute surrender, and it must be admitted that the propositions of the anti-Kindredites partook much

of the same character. Despite the unfavorable weather, the scenes in the streets during the entire forenoon and up to the time of the meeting of the convention at 1 o'clock were animated, while heated discussions in the hotels and saloons added nothing to the chance of compromise.

The Kindred delegates met in caucus at the opera house at 10 o'clock, with a full attendance. The Tribune representative mingled with the delegates and was the only one of the 20 odd newspaper representatives who succeeded in gaining admission to the hall.

Meantime it had been determined by the congressional committee that admission to the convention hall should be by ticket, the purpose being to shut out the Kindred strikers from Dakota, who had swooped down upon Detroit in force with the intention of yelling their man through and it began to dawn upon the minds of the outsiders that the Kindredites were executing a flank movement to hold possession of the hall at the hour for the beginning of the convention—packing it with their adherents, who could not well be excluded after the convention had been called to order. Liberal supplies of crackers and cheese were sent into the hall in charge of persons whose bulging coat-tail pockets told eloquently of the presence of "wet groceries." At 12: 15, the doors were opened and the Kindredites were found massed on the right side of the hall.

At the same hour the Republicans met in caucus in a large tent provided for the purpose, at which speeches were made by Nelson, Gilman and Graves, counseling union of action in order that the rights of the majority be maintained.

As the hour of 1: 00 approached [recorded H. P. Hall in a telegram to the St. Paul Globe, a Kindred champion], the anti-Kindred forces gathered at the Nelson tent and at 12: 55 came marching in a body to the hall. There were a good many of the Kindred delegates outside the hall also, as the crowd surged up the stairway, the jam was immense. At the door of the hall were representatives of both factions, who would only admit those they knew to be delegates. As there were more outsiders than delegates, the crowd outside was the biggest, and but for the sheriff and a force of thirty deputies, the doors would have succumbed to the pressure.

Contests Before the Committee

Before the convention met the congressional committee had been wrestling with the problem of the contested delegations. So many contests had been instituted that there were but few delegations whose right to seats were conceded by both sides. The committee stood five to four against Kindred, and one of the anti-Kindred members offered a resolution naming the following as the duly elected delegates and declaring that no others

should be permitted to participate in the temporary organization:

Aitkin—D. G. Knox—1.
Big Stone—Beardsley, Sawyer, Pettingill—3.
Crow Wing—W. W. Kartley, Frank Thompson, C. B. Sleeper—3.
Clay—S. G. Comstock, L. O. Storla, T. A. Crover—3.
Becker—E. G. Holmes, Dunlap, Ole Bonde—3.
Douglas—F. B. Van Hoesen, J. H. VanDyke, Colonel H. Jenkins, George H. Reynolds—4.
Cook—S. M. Wilson—1.
Grant—Timothy Heald, C. F. Washburn, Knute Melby, Ole O. Canestrop—4.
Cass—Leavitt—1.
Lake—Henry Wieland—1.
Morrison—J. H. Rhodes, D. Corbin—2.
Mille Lacs—C. H. Ryan, J. T. D. Sadley—2.
Otter Tail—George W. Boyington, B. N. Johnson, Moses E. Clapp, Amund Leverson, H. E. Rawson, John G. Nelson, Jacob Austin, C. D. Baker, A. C. Hatch—9.
Pope—Thore Thorson, Notman Shook, Michael Wallon—3.
Stearns—H. C. Waite, A. Barto, F. H. Dam, A. L. Elliot—4.
St. Louis—Colonel D. G. Cash, R. C. Mitchell, J. Burke—3.
Wilkin—J. Childs, Ransom Phelps—2.
Wadena—C. E. Bullard, Harrison Lyons—2.

Colonel Johnston Deposed

Colonel Johnston denounced this resolution as unfair and flatly refused to put it to a vote. Thereupon Mr. Comstock, Moorhead, submitted the resolution to the committee, which adopted it by a vote of five to three, Colonel Johnston not voting. Shaking with anger, he defied the committee, announcing that he would organize the convention according to his own ideas, instead of being bound by the instructions of the committee. The five anti-Kindred men accepted his challenge and put through a motion deposing him as chairman and electing Governor Barto, Sauk Center, in his place.

Johnston, however, defied the committee's authority to remove him, on the grounds that he had been designated chairman by the state central committee. Later in the day, after he had attempted to call the convention to order, he called upon Captain H. A. Castle, secretary of the state central committee, who was present, to substantiate his claim.

The right of the committee to depose its chairman, when he refused to do its bidding, became a burning question in the campaign. It was submitted to James G. Blaine and Edward McPherson, the parliamentarian of the national house of representatives, both eminent authorities on parliamentary procedure, and both held that the committee acted within its rights. Schuyler Colfax, former vice president and speaker of the house, gave a similar opinion, whereas the Kindred partisans were unable to produce contrary opinions from any authorities of standing.

A Hundred Men With Pistols

All things considered, it was remarkable that the convention did not result in bloody warfare. "There were probably a hundred men present in the hall with pistols in their pockets," said Mr. Hall in his "Observations," "and it is a wonder someone did not fire the first shot." He gave it as his opinion that the presence in the hall of a superior number of Kindred men acted as a peace measure. The Nelson men realized that they were completely outnumbered, and that if war broke loose they would be vanquished.

Both Johnston and Barto forced their way into the opera house to call the convention to order. Barto was very big and fat, making it harder for him to squeeze through the crowd that filled the stairway from the sidewalk to the hall, so he was a little behind the redoubtable colonel. It was 1:15 in the afternoon when the rival chairmen reached the platform.

> Johnston [wrote Mr. Hall], announced that they had decided to clear the hall, and then he and Barto would issue tickets. Barto said they would give Nelson and Kindred one hundred each and Gilman and Graves twenty-six each. The Kindred men objected on the ground that Gilman and Graves were really for Nelson, and hence it would give the Nelson men the largest number. The Kindred men were satisfied as it was. While the controversy was going on, a Kindred man nominated E. G. Holmes, Detroit, for chairman. Holmes bounded to the platform in a twinkling and started his convention. The Nelson men were a little behind, but not much. Some Nelson man made a motion to elect S. G. Comstock, Moorhead, temporary chairman, and Barto put the motion so quickly that Comstock

leaped to the platform and began the Nelson convention only a few seconds behind the Kindred.

Then there was pandemonium let loose. Everyone seemed to be yelling at the same time. Holmes and Comstock stood side by side and their respective adherents would rush to the front and make motions, which the chairman would declare carried. After about five minutes of this scene, former Sheriff Mertz, Brainerd, a very resolute man and warm friend of Kindred, jumped on the platform and, grabbing Comstock, tried to pull him off, saying, "You have no business here." It was scarcely a second before thirty to forty men were on the stage to aid Comstock and Mertz respectively, and they were a good deal hustled about. Comstock stood his ground well and resisted being dragged off the platform, but did not strike a blow.

The crowd had overturned the reporters' table and we had mounted an extemporaneous table to get a view of the fight. As the excitement was at its highest, crash went our table and we were all tumbled promiscuously to the floor. I believe that little accident was providential. It made a laugh, and laughter and anger are not close friends. It also diverted attention for a moment, and by the time we had picked ourselves up from the floor, the sheriff, with ten or 12 deputies, was on the platform commanding the peace and hustling men off the stage. Partial quiet was restored, when Johnston declared that he would recognize but one chairman, and that was Holmes. Barto, in reply, insisted that he (Barto) was chairman of the district committee by a vote of five out of nine. Captain Castle's statement was then made, as already mentioned, and the Kindred men yelled.

Johnston then proceeded to read the call for the convention, a proceeding which should have been done before the chairman was selected. He was nearly through when it occurred to Barto to read it also, and he began on the same document. And then a fresh riot sprung up. Not a word of the reading could be heard, and eight or ten men were trying to make speeches in the midst of the yells. Johnston finally shouted an order to clear the stage of everyone but the committee and the reporters. That would have removed both Holmes and Comstock. He said he had hired the hall and would have it cleared. On this announcement a Nelson man shouted: "I move that we adjourn to the tent on the prairie." Comstock put the motion and declared it carried.

With a few more touches of melodrama the two factions separated, the Nelson men, reinforced by the supporters of Graves and Gilman, forcing their way out of the opera house to the tent on the green and the Kindred men holding the fort in the hall.

It did not take the Kindred men long to nominate their hero and to adopt a platform, which was very brief, being confined to the rights of their faction to the

title of "regular Republicans," and making no reference to party principles, such as were always solemnly enunciated in the platforms of those days.

Nelson Nominated in the Tent

Nor did it cost the anti-Kindred delegates much time or effort to agree on a platform and a candidate. There were neither chairs nor tables in the tent, so the proceedings were decidedly informal. The platform was rather lengthy, containing ten planks. The first five set forth party principles dear to the hearts of all true Republicans; the rest denounced the Kindred faction in vigorous terms, charging that the Brainerd candidate was trying to buy a seat in the national congress.

Nelson, Gilman and Graves were all placed in nomination for congressman, with the following result on the informal ballot: Nelson, forty-four votes; Gilman, ten votes, and Graves, seven votes. After the taking of a formal ballot, which stood about the same as the informal, Nelson's nomination was made unanimous.

The nominee was brought before the convention and spoke as follows:

Gentlemen of the convention: I have been informed that you have nominated me for congress from the fifth district. I thank you, especially in consideration of the circumstances which make the day memorable. I am not your candidate so much as the exponent of a principle in this campaign. These are important times. In this new congressional district it is of the utmost importance to make a right beginning. I feel that I have conducted this campaign as fairly and honorably as any honorable man could. The circumstances in yonder hall were not of my doing, but what has been repeated today has been carried on in the county canvasses in many counties in the district. What you today have had to contend with has been contended with in several county conventions.

I speak in candor and moderation, but I can't help saying it is of the utmost importance that we establish this principle, that the congressional office is not to be put up at auction.

I have felt it was of little matter who the candidate is, if we only established this principle beyond peradventure.

The campaign is inaugurated. Every one of you is a candidate. Your character, reputation and manhood are at stake. If you work with that inspiration, you will succeed. All manner of methods will be used against you. I will be true. I will do all in my power to maintain the integrity of the Republican party in this district.

If I am elected to this high office, if I am sent to congress, I will do the utmost in my power for the fifth district and in all things. I will live up to the utterance of Abraham Lincoln, "doing the right as God gives me to see the right."

That was a good speech, admirably suited to the occasion. It defined the issue very clearly and forcibly. The speaker said neither too much nor too little. That is an art in itself, most difficult of attainment. It is to be doubted whether any other public man in the northwest showed such unerring judgment in this respect as Knute Nelson.

The closing sentences, wherein he pledges his devotion to the Republican party, his district and his country, are admirable. As in his announcement to the readers of Budstikken, he closed with Lincoln's solemn words. He did the same in a speech at Fergus Falls earlier in the campaign and at various times during the year. His love for the martyred president was deep and strong, finding utterance all through his life. Perhaps the most fervent of all his public speeches was his eulogy of Abraham Lincoln, delivered in the senate chamber a few years before his death.

Gilman and Graves, the minority candidates, also addressed the convention, pledging their hearty support to the nominee. The finest of feeling prevailed. All were determined to fight to the last ditch, though none were over-confident as to the outcome. They realized that they were confronted by a man of exceptional nerve and energy, who seemed to balk at nothing to attain his ends.

Mr. Hall's assertion that Mr. Kindred "had but little backing but his money," is undoubtedly too strong. He had a likeable personality, nor was he lacking in brains. Brainerd was for him almost to a man, not altogether because he was such a liberal spender, but because the community liked him. If he had not been so grossly indiscreet in disbursing his ill-gotten wealth, he would have proved a really formidable contender for the congressional prize.

Mr. Kindred's strength was in the territory along the

lines of the Northern Pacific. In that territory he had put many influential men under obligations to him. As Mr. Adams says, he had shown favors to some while fleecing others.

Unfortunately, Dakota was not a part of the Fifth congressional district. Across the line in that territory, Kindred sentiment ran very strong. Some of the newspapers humorously nick-named him "The Dakota Candidate." Scores of Kindred boosters crossed over from the land of the coyotes and, as we have seen, from Fargo came brass bands and marchers to help along "Charlie's" cause at the Detroit convention.

A Wild Night at Detroit

The evening of July 12, 1882, was a wild one in the little village of Detroit. The women of the town had opened a hall to sell refreshments for the benefit of the local cemetery association. Kindred rose magnificently to the occasion. He gave $100 outright to the association, and one of the wits on his side said this was done because the Kindred men wanted to finish up the cemetery so as to have a proper place to bury Nelson after the election in the fall. That was an exceedingly good joke, but, as was shrewdly observed later, since Kindred, himself, furnished the political corpse in November, he "was wise in dedicating a cemetery at the beginning of the campaign."

The Kindred bands marched up and down the streets, triumphantly blowing their horns, followed by hundreds of cheering and yelling enthusiasts. There were many heated arguments between equally heated partisans and the saloons did the liveliest business in the history of the village.

Mr. Nelson showed a sense of humor as well as sportsmanship by calling on Mr. Kindred at his hotel before leaving the village.

The Post-Primary Campaign

Neither faction spent much time resting up after the Detroit ordeal. Colonel Sleeper was retained as com-

mander-in-chief of the Kindred forces, while Charles A. Gilman was made chairman of Nelson's congressional committee. Both sides claimed to be the "regular Republicans," each calling the other "bolters." That a large majority of the counties had been carried by Nelson and the other anti-Kindred candidates in the primaries was recognized by most disinterested observers outside the district, and after the convention all of the Twin City Republican dailies, except one, supported Nelson as the rightful Republican nominee. The St. Paul Globe, the vitriolic organ of Democracy, was for Kindred before the Detroit convention and continued for him to the election.

Within the district most of the Republican weeklies supported Nelson, and so did a large majority of the leading Republican politicians. The few Democratic newspapers upheld their own candidate, E. P. Barnum, but deemed it good politics to throw more gibes at Nelson than at Kindred. As a matter of fact, some of the Democratic weeklies were outspoken for Kindred, whatever the reason.

For a time it was uncertain whether the Democrats would take the trouble to place a candidate in the field. They were so few and far between in the new district that all realized the hopelessness of trying to elect one of their number to congress. The Nelson partisans hoped that the Jeffersonians would nominate a candidate, for they knew that as between Nelson and Kindred most of the "faithful" would prefer Kindred. Many of them had helped him in the primaries. The Kindred men took the same view, and did all they could to prevent the Democrats from putting forward a standard bearer. The St. Paul Globe was outspoken against a convention, denouncing the move in that direction as a Nelson-Washburn scheme. It is of interest to note that all through the campaign the Kindred followers referred to the "Nelson-Washburn ring," and the Globe charged that the Minneapolis Tribune was the ring's wicked organ.

In due time—September 6—the followers of Jeffer-

son and Jackson held a convention at Fergus Falls and nominated E. P. Barnum, Sauk Center. C. F. McDonald, St. Cloud, a colleague of Knute Nelson in the state senate, presided. Robert Miller, Otter Tail, and R. C. Moore, Stevens, were placed in nomination, in addition to Mr. Barnum, who was an easy winner. Efforts were made by the Kindred forces to persuade Mr. Barnum to withdraw, but he stayed in the race and polled more than a fifth of the votes cast. Indeed, it is possible that without Mr. Barnum or another good Democrat in the field, Kindred might have won, for Nelson got 1,550 votes less than a majority.

The primaries and the clash at Detroit had been extremely bitter, but the post-primary campaign was even more so. The interest and excitement continued. The trial and execution of Guiteau, the murderer of President Garfield, then occupied the attention of the public, but did not overshadow in interest the struggle in the "Bloody Fifth."

Nothing was left unsaid in the way of denunciation and vituperation. Mr. Kindred was pictured as a crook, a swindler and a corruptionist. Mr. Nelson was held up to scorn as a tool of the railroads and milling corporations, as a claim-jumper, as an infidel, a selfish, scheming lawyer, a bulldozer, an un-American Norwegian, a bolter, both in Minnesota and Wisconsin.

Interesting Campaign Documents

The chief campaign document of the Nelson forces was a pamphlet of some fifty pages, prepared by H. L. Gordon, Minneapolis, one of the most interesting political characters in the state. He was an ardent admirer of Nelson and, though not a resident of the Fifth district, was one of the chief performers at the Detroit convention. He had a powerful voice, which won him the nickname of "Thundering Gordon," and which he used to good advantage when he mounted a chair and urged all the Nelson, Graves and Gilman delegates to leave the opera house and repair to the tent "on the prairie." This pamphlet, written with unusual ability, told in

detail the story of Kindred's manipulations as chief clerk of the Northern Pacific land department and of his irregular methods in the precinct caucuses, the county conventions and the district convention. Mr. Gilman, chairman of the Nelson committee, sponsored this interesting document, of which 25,000 copies were printed and distributed. It is said that only two copies are now known to be in existence.

The Kindred charges against Nelson were summed up in the form of a printed sheet, which was given general distribution. Neither side spared printer's ink or paper in their efforts to "educate" the voters.

No record has been made of the number of newspapers either bought or started by the Kindred managers, but it was probably greater than the total of a man's fingers. In the city of Fergus Falls alone two were launched—the Telegram, an English daily, and Tiden, a Norwegian weekly. Duluth was not slighted, a new daily being set adrift on the journalistic sea from that harbor. Many, if not most, of these abortive organs came to naught after Kindred's political hopes had been shattered, but while the campaign lasted they helped to enliven many lonely firesides in the woods and on the prairies of northern Minnesota.

Democrats Wage Humorous Campaign

Of course, the Democrats got a lot of fun out of the Kindred-Nelson row within the Republican party. Their orators, in campaigning for Mr. Barnum, could prove conclusively by reading from "Thundering" Gordon's pamphlet that Kindred was a crook, not worthy of an honest man's vote, and it was just as easy to establish Nelson's "unworthiness" by reading the choicest extracts from the Kindred masterpiece.

This is the way Judge John W. Willis, St. Paul, performed at Fergus Falls and doubtless elsewhere. He would pick up the Kindred broadside and read about Nelson; then he would read from Gordon about Kindred's record, and at frequent intervals would blandly remark:

"I don't know much about either of the Republican candidates, but if what they say about each other is true, then you had better vote for Mr. Barnum."

Here is a Kindred gem, printed in the Tiden office at Fergus Falls:

NUTE NELSON.

The reasons why he should not be supported for congress.

He is employed to drive the poor settlers off their lands after they have made valuable improvements on them.

He is the attorney for the Millers' Association at Minneapolis, and through that corporation robs every wheat farmer of a portion of his crop when he brings it to market.

He stood on the fence when the bill came up in the legislature to extend the St. Paul and Pacific railroad through Otter Tail and Douglas counties until several thousand acres of land were transferred to him.

He has agreed to change his residence to Fergus in return for the support of the Fergus voters.

He is buying his way to congress, using more money and in the most corrupt manner ever known in American politics.

He is an infidel!

He don't believe in God!

He don't keep his promise to man!

He is not an American!

He persecutes church people!

He threatens to disrupt the Republican party.

So eager were the Kindred managers to unearth flaws in Knute Nelson's record that they sent an emissary to Dane county, Wisconsin, to investigate his early life. This man was directed to the home of Gulleik Saue, the famous giant of Deerfield, whom Nelson had dared to defy and who had since been his enemy. But although Gulleik had not liked Knute when the two were together in old Koshkonong, Gulleik rebelled at the idea of telling things to a scandal-monger. He was too much of a man for that.

How much attention Nelson, himself, paid to the Kindred attacks is not so very clear. He replied to some of them and the home papers and his friends were active in controverting and denying accusations, some of which, at least, they might well have ignored.

In his later days, Knute Nelson never replied to an attack nor made any explanations. He let his opponents

talk and denounce to their hearts' content, while he went his way calm and serene.

The Regularity Question

The most important issue in the campaign was the "regularity" argument. Each side fervently declaimed that its convention at Detroit was the "regular" Republican convention.

It was very hard to ascertain the truth [writes H. P. Hall], for both the Nelson and the Kindred men had resorted to all kinds of tricks known to the political trade to capture delegates. I am inclined to think, outside of leaving the hall at Detroit, where the convention was called to meet, Nelson had the best of the regularity, but with that thrown in Kindred's favor, it gave him the "regular" advantage.

In 1868, almost the entire excuse for calling Donnelly a bolter was because he was nominated for congress at a different place than the hall designated in the call.

The only way the Nelson men could have been more regular was to have remained and had a fight, but as a stray bullet might have hit a newspaper man, I was always willing to waive the irregularity of their departure from the hall. As the Kindred men, by the coup d'etat of getting possession of the hall at an early hour, had two to one on the inside of the building, they could have thrown the Nelson men out bodily, and that would have made it "regular" for them to have gone to another place for their convention, on the ground that they had been physically assaulted.

Kindred's Campaign Paraphernalia

With the possible exception of Isaac Stephenson, Wisconsin, and William A. Clark, Montana, each of whom spent a fortune to be elected a United States senator, Charles F. Kindred conducted the most extravagant political campaign in the history of the northwest. He gathered sufficient paraphernalia to run a national campaign. He had workers in every county doing nothing else from the time he was nominated in July until the polls closed in November.

His army of clerks and his literary bureau were expensive [according to Mr. Hall]. Brass bands, torchlight processions, special trains, etc., were the common occurrence, and when you come to spread this out over twenty-nine big counties, many of them having to be canvassed by private conveyance to make up the poll of the district, the expense amounted to something enormous. Well in-

formed men claimed at the time that Kindred expended $225,000. This may be too large, but I think it is extremely conservative to say that he put in $150,000. Minnesota is not likely to see the counterpart of that fight again.

Mr. Kindred went back to his old home in Philadelphia some years after his plunge into Minnesota politics and there died at a ripe old age. It is said that he was very fortunate in speculations and recouped his fortune. At the same time he built up a rather formidable machine as a political boss, a la Croker and Murphy, controlling one of the principal wards in the Quaker city.

He was not a "bad sort" in his way. When Knute Nelson went to Brainerd in his campaign for re-election in 1884, he was cordially welcomed by Mr. Kindred, who had become one of his supporters. In 1886, when the Republican congressional convention was held at Brainerd and Mr. Nelson was renominated for a third term, Mr. Kindred acted as chairman and did his share to make it unanimous. So it is both in war and politics. Each of these interesting phenomena is a clash of rival ambitions and interests; the stronger the forces involved, the fiercer the fight, the more lurid the drama. And when the war is over the former rivals often become fast friends.

Nelson Was Hard Up

While Kindred was "flush," Nelson was hard up and had much difficulty in paying his bills. Letters exchanged by Knute Sandvig, Ada, and the candidate furnish interesting evidence of this.

Mr. Sandvig had been hired by Alexander Running, the Nelson manager in Norman county, to do some work, and late in July Mr. Sandvig addressed this stern note to the future senator:

Sir: I would like to have an explanation why it is that Mr. Running cannot get that expense bill settled. I placed confidence in Mr. Running's promise that he would pay me back what cash I paid out and would pay a reasonable wage for my team and for my own work which I did. It seems, though, we cannot hear anything more from you, and I, for one, cannot understand what it means. It

must be overlooked by you or your representatives, as I cannot believe you to have done this wilfully.

When Mr. Running came to me and wanted me to go out, I was very busy, but started. I went out and was gone four days, myself and team, and paid my own expenses. I would not have said anything about it if Mr. Running had not promised me a reasonable pay.

I have done what little I could for you and I hope to do more in the future.

I hope to hear from you soon.

Under date of July 29, 1882, Mr. Nelson wrote:

Your favor of the 27th inst., calling for explanation as to payment of bills, is received today.

In answer to same, allow me to say. First: That I left this with Ames to settle at the time, and I supposed that he had, but it seems he failed to do so. Second: Mr. Running sent the bill to Mr. Ames afterwards, and Mr. Ames failed to call my attention to the bill until some three or four days before the Detroit convention, and at that time I was not able to meet the payment, as I needed what I then had at hand at the Detroit convention. Third: At the Detroit convention, I told Mr. Running about these things, and told him that as soon as I got home I would raise the money and send it to him. Fourth: As soon as I got home I took the first way to raise the money I could at once, viz.: I had a mortgage which, in order to realize a little more money on than I could here at home, I sent to Mr. Steensland at Madison, but he was away on an excursion and, hence, I have had no response.

However, I am glad to say by reason of the sale of a piece of land yesterday, I am able to send the money to Mr. Running, which I hope he has received by this time.

I am sorry that you and Mr. Running have had to wait so long, but I have explained fully the cause of the delay. I regret that my means are so limited that I could not pay on a moment's notice, but I feel conscious of doing the best I could. I enclose this letter to Mr. Running in order that it may serve as an explanation to both of you.

You can yourself inquire about the Steensland matter and the land deal, and you will find that it is as I said. Yours truly,

KNUTE NELSON.

Mr. Hall intimated that the Nelson forces had plenty of money at their disposal, but in this he was mistaken. Senator Nelson, himself, expressed the opinion after the campaign that only about $5,000 was spent in his behalf.

NELSON'S STRENUOUS CAMPAIGN

Nelson opened his speaking campaign two months before the election, and from that time until the polls

opened held from one to two meetings daily, except on Sundays. His campaign showed unusual ability as well as courage. There were other speakers in the field on his side, but he bore the brunt of the contest—bore it without flinching.

Again and again friends warned him to stay away from certain towns and villages, fearing assaults upon him, but he never quailed. The Viking nature of the man asserted itself.

> Stern to inflict, stubborn to endure,
> Who smiled in death.

In those days in northern Minnesota it was very hard to get from place to place for lack of transportation facilities. But in spite of bad weather and bad roads, Nelson kept his dates. Wherever he spoke the people were impressed by his rugged strength, his fearlessness, his ability to drive home his points with crushing force, and the skill with which he answered trouble-makers that interrupted him. Few men have been better able to look after themselves in such emergencies.

A part of the time, during the campaign, Mr. Nelson and his manager, C. A. Gilman, traveled together, and the experiences they had are shown by this statement, made by Mr. Gilman at the time of the senator's death:

"No one can ever know the hardships we endured. We had to go through deep forests as we moved from place to place. We encountered all sorts of weather. We slept any place—even in haystacks."

Nelson's speaking tour opened at Thompson, near Duluth, October 2, and closed at Fergus Falls the night before election. As was to be expected in a campaign marked by such bitterness of feeling, things happened at these meetings, especially in the Kindred territory along the Northern Pacific and on the iron range.

At the Thompson meeting Nelson showed quickness of eye as well as mental agility. He spoke from the teacher's platform in a little old school house. In the rear was a Kindred man, who did not like either the speech or the candidate. He expressed his disapproval

by throwing an egg squarely at the speaker's head. Nelson dodged, and the egg splashed against the blackboard. What was done about it history does not say. Presumably the egg made votes for Nelson, not Kindred.

Saved from a Yankee Trap

At Verndale, Wadena county, a lumber town, where Kindred had plenty of backers—he had in all the lumbering districts—a big Norwegian saved the future congressman from an embarrassing fall. Nelson spoke from a platform about four feet high in the rear of the crude hall. Some of the Kindred men sawed off the supports in the middle of the platform, so that Nelson should fall through. Colonel Bullard, one of Kindred's friends, asked for the privilege of escorting the candidate to the hall and presiding at the meeting. He was in the conspiracy and wished to make sure that it would be properly executed.

But here entered the big Norwegian, who bore the good Norse name of Hendrickson. He was a lumberjack and up to this time had belonged to the Kindred camp. But he did not believe that all is fair in politics, whatever it may be in love. He would not see his countryman, Knute, fall into a "Yankee trap."

So he served notice on Colonel Bullard that if he allowed Nelson to step where the platform was weak, he would "thrash him within an inch of his life." The colonel knew that Hendrickson meant business and was well able to administer the "thrashing," hence, much to the disgust of his fellow conspirators, he cautioned the speaker against stepping to the middle of the platform, as it was pretty weak. The meeting passed off without any untoward incidents.

Captain Brown's Charge on Oxen

One of the outstanding figures of the campaign was Captain A. A. Brown of Alexandria, a bitter enemy of Knute Nelson's. His activity against the home candidate made him a marked man in the community, and there were many sharp encounters between him and the future

congressman's followers. Finally the controversy led to shooting, not of human beings, but of a yoke of innocent oxen.

Two versions of the incident were published, as follows:

Captain A. A. Brown, an influential Norwegian of Alexandria—an ex-U. S. land officer and state senator—and a respected citizen of Douglas county, the home of Knute Nelson, is a zealous supporter of C. F. Kindred for congress, because he has long been cognizant of Nelson's trickery, political and professional, and his general unfitness for congressman. Captain Brown has been subject to many little meannesses visited upon him by Nelson bummers at Alexandria.

Last week some of the Nelson outfit took the gates off their hinges and turned a pair of oxen into Captain Brown's garden in the night, utterly destroying it. The captain, finding the cattle there and knowing the spirit that dictated it, took down his Winchester and filled the aforesaid oxen full of bullet holes, so that they will not destroy any more gardens on this side of the river. Knute, being responsible for this outrage, should take some of Washburn's money and go settle for these same oxen.—*Brainerd Dispatch.*

As a sample of Kindred's campaign literature, we publish the foregoing for the benefit of those who are not acquainted with the facts connected with the bold and courageous charge of the captain on a pair of oxen, and for the benefit of C. B. Sleeper, the author of the foregoing lie, we will briefly state the facts:

The cattle were the property of Mr. Canfield, the well known register of deeds of this county; they escaped from the custody of Mr. Burr, a farmer who had them in charge, and wandered of their own accord into Mr. Brown's yard and had been there not exceeding five minutes. And in the broad light of day the captain commenced the most memorable fusillade ever recorded in the history of Douglas county. To him:

> "There was something of pride in the perilous hour,
> Whate'er be the shape in which death may lower,
> For fame is there, to tell who bleeds,
> And honor's eye on daring needs."

It is true the captain shot this pair of oxen; not with a Winchester, but with a revolver, putting two balls in one and three in the other, and the captain, not satisfied with the glory achieved by his victory over a pair of unprotected oxen, this knight errant of the age, this paragon of modern chivalry, tells the owner of the cattle that he has one bullet left in one chamber of his revolver for him.—*Douglas County News.*

The Returns from the Pineries

Lucius F. Hubbard, who was governor in 1882, was prevailed upon by Cushman K. Davis, Kindred's legal

adviser, to establish voting precincts in the pineries north of Grand Rapids and Aitkin, where Kindred sentiment ran high.

This caused anxiety in the Nelson camp. They feared there would be all sorts of illegal voting and stuffing of ballot boxes, as there was no adequate system of registering the voters, no Australian ballots, printed and distributed by the county governments, and no dependable supervision of the polling places. It was noised about that the plan of the Kindred men was to hold back the returns from these northern counties until after the result elsewhere was known, so that if the Brainerd candidate needed a lift from the north to put him over, that would be forthcoming.

For the purpose of circumventing this scheme, if possible, Charles A. Gilman, Nelson's manager, Major Brackett, Minneapolis, and Ole Amundson, Evansville, went up to the pineries to be on guard. At the same time, notice was served upon Governor Hubbard that there would be "something doing" if the returns were held back very long.

The vote in Itasca county was: Nelson, two; Barnum, eight; Kindred, 683; in Aitkin county: Nelson, twenty-eight; Barnum, none; Kindred, 289.

But the more thickly settled southern counties of the big district went so strong for Nelson that the Kindred managers realized the futility of overcoming the "Little Norwegian's" lead by false returns from the north, so, if they had such designs in the first place, they were abandoned.

Up in the extreme northeast corner of Otter Tail county lies the township of Norwegian Grove. Every vote there was cast for Knute Nelson. That, of course, was exceptional, but town after town in such counties as Otter Tail, Grant, Norman, Pope and Douglas, came in practically unanimous for the future senator.

The vote by counties follows:

County	Nelson	Kindred	Barnum
Aitkin	34	289	.....
Becker	622	501	62
Big Stone	400	171	215
Benton	235	164	164
Carlton	389	750	40
Cass	59	463	51
Clay	1,196	315	.....
Crow Wing	174	2,158	52
Douglas	1,507	221	237
Grant	684	102	30
Itasca	2	683	8
Kittson	369	241	.....
Lake	34	1	1
Mille Lacs	73	268	48
Morrison	279	726	.....
Marshall	347	125	13
Norman	1,044	261	14
Otter Tail	3,119	533	657
Pope	925	167	160
Polk	1,258	1,127	309
Stearns	1,359	902	2,123
Stevens	432	388	269
St. Louis	968	847	250
Todd	681	185	442
Traverse	268	149	75
Wadena	210	334	159
Wilkin	260	221	77
Totals	16,936	12,238	6,248

Nelson's majority over Kindred, 4,718.

So ended the crucial contest of Knute Nelson's political career.

If he had gone down to defeat, it is very doubtful whether he would ever have risen again in the politics of the state, for he would have been branded forever as a bolter, a trouble-maker and a disrupter of the Republican party. Few or none defend the vanquished. As it was, his triumph at the polls was all the defense he needed against the charges hurled against him, and the fact that he won the great fight gave him enduring prestige.

Chapter IX

REGENT AND CONGRESSMAN

There was rejoicing in Alexandria and Douglas county. Only Captain Brown and a few followers were not happy and kept in the background when the community, which had given the congressman-elect an almost unanimous endorsement, ratified the result with a noisy celebration—the first of many in honor of Knute Nelson. Bonfires were lighted in Main street. The band played. Then all fell into line and marched to the Nelson home, where the future representative expressed his thanks for the loyal support of his neighbors, and where Professor A. R. Cornwall paid him a glowing tribute in one of his scintillating speeches. It was a jolly occasion for everybody, especially for the former Albion principal and his best loved student, the penniless Norwegian lad who fought his way to an education with sheer pluck and resolution. As has been stated, Professor Cornwall took an active part in the campaign to help counteract the vicious Kindred slanders by portraying Knute Nelson's early life and record.

Mr. Nelson was now a distinguished man, known all over the northwest and wherever the Norwegian language was spoken. As the first of his nationality to attain a seat in the United States congress, he was regarded with peculiar pride by Norsemen everywhere. Later, when he also became the first governor and the first United States senator of Norse descent, that feeling of pride was intensified.

Norse Immigrants Not Office-Seekers

With few exceptions, the early Norwegian immigrants were men and women of lowly birth. They looked with respect to those in the higher walks of life in Norway, were modest and simple in their ways. This attitude they brought with them to America. They were defer-

ential toward their American neighbors, content with a simple home, grateful for the opportunity to become citizens of this republic. Most of them, indeed, were too modest to consider themselves the equal of the "Yankees." And that was not to their discredit. It was better to be humble and modest than haughty and boastful. Some of their neighbors may have taken advantage of their meekness by trespassing on their rights, but the truth is the American people received the Norwegian immigrants with kindly feeling and treated them with consideration. "They were an industrious, prudent and worthy people, held in good repute," said a local historian about the first Norwegian colony in America—the Kendall settlement, New York. If they had been less modest, it is probable they would not have been held in such "good repute."

In the beginning the Norwegian pioneers were not office-seekers. They voted, but let the Yankees and the Irish run the government. It was not until their children had developed into full-grown men and women, educated in American schools and imbued with American ideals, that the Norse group began to hold up their heads and assume a more aggressive attitude. Then it was they felt that participation in politics would be an insignia of equality. Then Norwegians came forward as candidates for county offices, the legislature, state offices and the congress. The first Norwegian to sit in a state legislature was James D. Reymert, elected to the Wisconsin assembly from Racine county, in 1849. The first to fill an elective state office was Colonel Hans C. Heg, who served as prison commissioner of Wisconsin, just before the Civil war. The first Norwegian to aspire to congress was Mr. Reymert, who came near being elected on the Democratic ticket in Wisconsin, in 1860. Prior to 1882, quite a number of Swedes and Norwegians held state offices in Minnesota and elsewhere, and service in the legislature had become a very common thing among them; but the national house, the governorship and the United States senate had been beyond their reach. It was felt by the Scandinavians that election

to these positions would complete, so to speak, their peaceful conquest of a "place in the sun."

Today, when congressmen, governors and United States senators of Scandinavian lineage are about as common as Irish generals, statesmen and policemen, this feeling has passed away. The Scandinavian group does not bother their heads about such things any more.

Named Regent by Governor Hubbard

Already before his election to congress, Mr. Nelson had been appointed to the university board of regents by Governor Lucius F. Hubbard. He served from February 1, 1882, to January 1, 1893, when he assumed the office of governor. As we have seen, he solicited this appointment largely for the opportunity it would give him to promote interest in Scandinavian literature and culture in the university. It was during his tenure of office, in 1884, that the Scandinavian department was established, with Professor O. J. Breda at its head.

Although Mr. Nelson was in Washington a good deal of the time he was regent, he took a keen interest in the university. In his inaugural address as governor, January 4, 1893, he spoke in high praise of the institution, as follows:

> In the field of education, Minnesota occupies high and advanced ground at all points. Our state university has within the last ten years grown beyond all precedent in quality, scope and numbers, and today ranks as one of the leading educational institutions of our country, to which we can all look with pride and admiration. In 1882, the total attendance of students was 253. In 1892, the number had reached 1,374. And during 1893, the number will exceed 1,500. Departments of law and medicine have been established and are in most successful operation. There were 453 law and medical students in attendance in 1892, and in 1893 the number will no doubt reach, if not exceed, 600. The fees charged students in these departments are nearly sufficient to pay the salaries of all the instructors and will in the near future be more than ample for this purpose. Perhaps nothing pertaining to the progress and growth of the university has been more marked and original than the establishment of a school of practical agriculture, giving special instruction in all that pertains to the theory and practice of agriculture, in all its branches. In connection with this school, and as a part thereof, is a dairy hall ample and well equipped, in which instruction is given in the theory and

practice of cheese and butter making by an expert instructor. This school has been well patronized by the sons of our farmers.

In the light of the present, how insignificant are the attendance figures quoted by Governor Nelson! However sanguine as to the growth of the university, it is safe to assume that he did not dream of such an enormous increase, both in the student body and the faculty.

Senator Nelson's interest in the university, as well as in the educational development of the state in general, is evidence of the universality of his interest as a public servant and of his high ideals as a citizen. For various reasons—his rather brusque and simple ways, his peculiar chin beard, which made him look like a New England farmer (according to an eastern writer), his notorious tobacco chewing habit and his fondness for "roughing it" on his Alexandria farm—only those who knew him intimately fully appreciated the extent of his cultural attainments. He had an unusually well equipped library of historical and literary works, which he read with intense satisfaction. His love of literature accounts, no doubt, for the excellence of his English. Among his colleagues in the senate were men who rose to higher flights of eloquence, whose literary style was more varied, more brilliant and more graceful, but it is doubtful whether any of them excelled him in that rare gift of expressing thought in terse, simple, natural, pure English.

Nelson Served Three Terms in Congress

Mr. Nelson served three terms in the national house. In 1884 he was accorded a unanimous nomination by the Republican party. The convention was held at Fergus Falls, April 23. No ballot was taken, the delegates merely rising to their feet amid "great enthusiasm," according to the press reports. Republican war-horses like Charles A. Gilman and Alphonso Barto were leading figures in the convention, the latter making the nominating speech.

"Resolved," so ran the closing plank in the platform,

"that the Honorable Knute Nelson fills the office of representative in congress with honor and credit to this district and to himself, and the interests of the district demand his re-elecion."

His Democratic opponent at the general election was Luther L. Baxter of Fergus Falls, a former state senator and representative, who later served as district judge. It was a one-sided contest, the Democratic party being extremely weak in the Fifth district and Nelson was even stronger than his party. He was not over-confident, however, watching the movements of the Democratic candidate with alert eyes.

"I have lately ascertained," he wrote to his friend, Luth Jaeger of the Budstikken, "that Baxter, the Democratic candidate from this district, is actively on a still hunt among the Americans—the program will be to make war on me as a Norwegian and on the Norwegians in general. It is going to be quietly and secretly urged among the Americans that it is necessary to break down the great Norwegian influence in this district. This will no doubt have some effect. The object is to defeat me, if possible, or at least to humiliate me by a small majority. I would be glad if the Budstikken would sound the alarm or at least awake our people to the true situation."

In 1886 his popularity was such that a number of newspapers "boomed" him for governor. This fact was observed by the Fergus Falls Journal, which said in April that the mention of his name has given the various candidates (for governor) a little uneasiness lest he might enter the race. "But," continues the Journal, "the Fifth district cannot very well spare Nelson yet. He is too valuable where he is—much more so than a new man would be."

"There is really no use in holding a convention at all," remarked the Duluth Herald about June 1, "for Knute has what opposition there is to him so badly beaten that no aspirant for his position dare make himself known. When Nelson is struck by a cyclone or swallowed up by an earthquake or kicked by a double-jointed

mule, there will be a show for somebody else to represent the Fifth district."

The congressional convention was held at Brainerd, June 30, with Charles F. Kindred as chairman. It was marked by the same unanimity as the one of 1884, no other candidate being considered. The delegates resolved "that we highly appreciate the services of Honorable Knute Nelson as our representative in congress. The extensive territory and vast interest of this district devolve upon its representative extraordinary labors, and Mr. Nelson has performed his duty with fidelity and honor."

This time the Democrats did not bother about putting up a candidate, and Knute Nelson was accorded the unique distinction of being handed both the nomination and his certificate of election on the proverbial "silver platter."

Declined Nomination in '88

But even though it came easier every time to be elected, the congressman grew restless and dissatisfied. In the fall of 1887 he made a public statement that he would not accept another nomination under any circumstances. Efforts to change his decision were futile, so in 1888 the Republican convention nominated his old friend and supporter, Solon G. Comstock, Moorhead, who had Mr. Nelson's active support in the campaign.

There was a great deal of speculation as to the congressman's motive. That he intended to withdraw permanently from politics few or none believed. Some surmised that he would run up his lightning rod for the governorship, others that his eye was on D. M. Sabin's seat in the United States senate, and it was even hinted that a place in the cabinet was the goal of his ambition.

"One thing is plain," asserted the Wadena Tribune, "if Knute Nelson wants to be the next governor of Minnesota, he can be elected. He has less chance to secure senatorial honors." "Any list of senatorial possibilities that does not include Knute Nelson and Ignatius Donnelly is not worth considering," was the Grant County

Herald's view. In a later issue, the same newspaper said that Mr. Nelson would be the almost unanimous choice for governor outside the cities. "He has made a splendid record in congress. As governor he would doubtless pursue the same line of policy he has in congress. He's the man for the present emergency."

The real reason for Congressman Nelson's retirement was given in an interview with the Washington representative of the Milwaukee Journal, who was a personal friend.

> I feel that I have wasted several good years [declared the congressman in May, 1889]. I have served a good people and would have been willing to have served them longer, but could not afford it. I am a poor man and have a family and it is my duty to provide for them. My majority at the last election was 40,000; and that is more votes than many districts can poll. I do not doubt that I could have remained in my position at least another term, but I felt it my duty to myself and my family to decline to be a candidate for renomination, and so informed my people long ago, as you personally know.
>
> No man has ever had a seat in the house but would like to continue in that position. It flatters one's vanity. But I saw the lives of others before me and constantly pictured for myself old age and failure. I could not consent to continue longer in political life, and therefore resolutely turned my face against the allurements of evanescent fame and declared myself out of politics. That determination cost me the ruthless sacrifice of personal ambition, pride and self-consciousness, in a sense.

The correspondent comments in these words on Mr. Nelson's retirement: "Hon. Knute Nelson was one of the rugged, honest figures in the last three congresses. He could not afford to remain in the national treadmill, hence deliberately turned away from an almost unanimous constituency and declared himself out of public life. It was highly commendable. It was a grand determination and betokened Napoleonic will. Knute Nelson may be forgotten by the general public, but he will always live in many minds as one of the truly great men of this country. . . . There are few men so strong, and I shall always speak of him with commendation."

"He will always live in many minds as one of the truly great men of this country." Those were significant words—more so in 1889, when Nelson was still a young

man, than if uttered after the senator had become Minnesota's "Grand Old Man." The statement proves that he had made a deep impression upon his colleagues in the congress. "The minute you began to talk with Knute Nelson in those days you realized that he was a man set apart from the ordinary fellows," said C. J. Melaas of Stoughton. He had reference to the youth teaching school in the Melaas district, near the old Buckeye tavern.

Colleagues in the House

When Knute Nelson went to Washington in 1883, he found a different sort of congress and a different government and capital from what a new congressman finds today. The house was only about half as large as now. The government was a very insignificant piece of machinery compared with the present organization. The capital city was a mere village in point of grandeur when set off against the Washington of 1926. The great dome was there, to be sure, but Pennsylvania avenue, and even the White House, lacked much of their present impressiveness. The vast growth of our nation's resources, wealth, population, these past forty-three years, has found expression in the capital city.

Chester A. Arthur had taken the murdered Garfield's place in the White House. S. J. R. McMillan and D. M. Sabin were Minnesota's senators. Milo White, J. B. Wakefield, H. B. Strait and W. D. Washburn were Nelson's Minnesota colleagues in the house. The house was controlled by the Democrats, two to one, and John G. Carlisle, one of the distinguished Jeffersonians of the country, was speaker. Among Knute Nelson's colleagues in 1883 were such Republicans as William McKinley of Ohio, Thomas B. Reed and William P. Frye of Maine, George Frisbie Hoar and John D. Long of Massachusetts, Sereno E. Payne of New York, Joseph G. Cannon of Illinois. Later, he was joined by leaders like Robert M. La Follette of Wisconsin, Henry Cabot Lodge of Massachusetts and John Lind of Minnesota. Leading Democratic colleagues of

Mr. Nelson included Roger Q. Mills, author of the famous tariff bill which bears his name; William R. Morrison of Illinois, also sponsor of a tariff measure; J. C. S. Blackburn of Kentucky, Richard P. Bland of Missouri and Samuel J. Randall of Pennsylvania.

After two years came Grover Cleveland and, being the first Democrat at the head of the government since Buchanan, Washington witnessed a real upheaval in official circles. But for the strong urge toward civil service reform, which President Cleveland favored, the shake-up would have been still greater. The tariff was by far the biggest issue before the people and congress. It was to some extent a struggle between the manufacturing interests of the east and the farmers of the west.

Nelson's Record in the House

During his service in the house, Mr. Nelson was a member of the committee on Indian affairs and, as such, took special interest in legislation affecting the red man's interest and welfare. In the spring of 1883 he obtained the opening to homestead settlement and entry of the Thirteen Towns, generally regarded as the garden spot of Polk county, Minnesota. They had been previously withdrawn from entry and made a part of the White Earth reservation, much to the disgust of prospective settlers.

Although a member of the minority party, Nelson succeeded in putting through congress a number of measures, none of nation-wide importance, but of no little consequence to northern Minnesota. The most notable of his acts is the so-called "Nelson law." Its official title in congress is "An act for the relief and civilization of the Chippewa Indians in Minnesota." It resulted in the cession of all the lands of this tribe, except the White Earth and Red Lake reservations, and has been sharply criticized by some, while praised by others. The agricultural lands thus ceded were thrown open to homesteaders at $1.25 per acre, payable in five yearly installments without interest, while the timber lands were sold at public sale to the highest bidder, at not less than the

appraised value. The value was figured on a basis of $3.00 per 1,000 feet for the timber on the land, making it impossible for the lumber interests to secure these lands for the small sum of $1.25 per acre, which had been the case in former years in northern Minnesota. Some of the lumbermen opposed the law, holding that the price it fixed as a minimum was too high, but others said nothing and bought all the land they could get.

The homestead provisions of the "Nelson law" are still in force, while those for the sale of the timber were later modified by the "Morris law," which Nelson was instrumental in putting through the senate while he was a member of that body.

Conservationists have attacked the "Nelson law" on the grounds that the "timber thieves" were given too free a hand, pursuing a policy of wastefulness and extravagance. In the light of future events, this criticism may be justified, but at the time the law was enacted the "timber thieves" thought they got pretty shabby treatment—much worse than they had been used to. The history of our country shows that legislation affecting our natural resources is one of the most difficult of all subjects to handle by the law-makers. The pressure of the people to develop the frontier has led to many abuses. Laws have been enacted in response to this pressure which have given opportunity for exploitation and waste. Millions of trees have been cut when too young; millions of defective logs have been left on the ground to rot. The slashings and the brush have been fertile causes of disastrous fires.

The friends, as well as the enemies, of a policy of conservation of our natural resources, have hampered congress in its work. The policy of one school of conservationists has been so drastic as to retard needed and legitimate development, while the "liberals," as we may call them, have been the agents of ruthless destroyers and exploiters.

From time to time, Nelson obtained liberal appropriations for the improvement of the harbors at Duluth and Two Harbors, and for the improvement of the upper

Mississippi river, the reservoirs and the Red river. He also secured appropriations for the establishment of lighthouses at Two Harbors and Grand Marais and for a public building and life-saving station and a fish hatchery at Duluth. A large number of local bills, permitting the construction of dams and bridges and for other internal improvements were passed through his efforts.

Mr. Nelson was very active in the establishment of new postoffices—nearly a hundred in all. These were warmly welcomed by the settlers and added greatly to the congressman's popularity. His industry and diligence, for which he became famous as a senator, were valuable assets and gave him a good name and standing among his colleagues, as it also did among his constituents.

Nelson's Tariff Stand in the House

The particular feature of Knute Nelson's record in the house, which attracted national attention, was his support of the Mills tariff bill, introduced by Roger Q. Mills of Texas. It had the ardent support of President Cleveland and was the leading issue in the national campaign of 1888. It reduced the duties by some seven or eight per cent and was denounced by Republican protectionists as a free trade measure, which showed hostility to the prosperity of American industry and indifference to the welfare of the American wage earner. The Republican platform of 1888 declared, "We favor the entire repeal of internal taxes rather than the surrender of our protective system." On this platform they won. But when they got into power and enacted the McKinley tariff law, there was a sharp rebound, which lost the Republicans the house in 1890 and the presidency two years later.

Congressman Nelson's tariff stand was clearly stated in a letter to Gudmund F. Johnson of the Budstikken, under date of July 7, 1884. "In so far as the tariff is concerned, I am the reverse of a protectionist. I believe in a tariff for revenue only, and think I am alone in that position among our entire delegation. But there is

nothing for me to do in this respect except to support such a bill as I hope our ways and means committee will introduce. . . . It would be idle for me to introduce a bill on this subject, as it would at once be sent to, and at the mercy of, this committee."

That is about as plain language as can be used, yet in the campaign of 1890, when he spoke for the Republican ticket in Minnesota, and in 1892, when he was himself the Republican standard bearer, he denied that he was inconsistent in the course he then pursued with respect to the tariff. In both campaigns the Republicans upheld the McKinley tariff law and in both instances Nelson stood with them.

"Conscience doth make cowards of us all." Political expediency does some pretty bad things also. Henry Clay's undying ambition to be president was that great leader's worst enemy as a statesman. Again and again Clay shifted his position on important issues, compromising with his own convictions, in the hope of overtaking that elusive phantom—the presidency. Knute Nelson's desire to be in good standing with his party and, perhaps, his ambition to become governor, caused him to make explanations of his tariff course as congressman a few years before which reflect seriously on his consistency as a statesman. Later, when he was securely intrenched in the United States senate, he swung back into line with his original course and remained a low tariff man to the end.

Congressman Nelson enunciated his tariff views in an exceedingly able speech to the house on March 29, 1888. Vital passages in this bear out the assertion in his letter to the Budstikken that he was still "the reverse of a protectionist," still a believer "in a tariff for revenue only":

> These taxes (tariff taxes) may properly be divided into two great heads, namely: purely revenue taxes, such as, for instance, a tax on tea or coffee; and protective taxes, such as are laid on products common to this country. All taxes not purely revenue taxes are, to some extent or in some degree, protective, except in those instances where nature has given us a practical monopoly, as in the case of

petroleum, cotton, gas, etc., or where there is a great over-production dependent on export trade, as in the case of wheat.

Owing to the vast and varied resources of our country, the items on which a purely revenue tariff could be levied are quite limited and to a large extent confined to the pure necessaries of life, and hence there are very few people, indeed, in this country who desire that our tariff taxes be limited to pure revenue items. So few, indeed, are these that it is not at all a question of practical moment. When we come to tariff taxes on products common to this country, we enter the domain of "protection," and have reached a practical question. A tariff on a commodity we readily produce, where our production does not quite equal or exceed our consumption, is, as a rule and to the degree of the tariff tax laid, protective. Where the tariff is very low, the protection will be very slight and the revenue quite ample. Where the tariff is very high, the duty will be more than protective; it will breed monopoly, and yield no revenue whatsoever. The primary object of a protective tariff is to enlarge and expand our field of production in those directions in which we are fairly open to expansion, for I do not believe a protective tariff is justified in those cases where nature has put a veto on the power of expansion, and where revenue, rather than increased production, seems to be the chief result, as in the case of sugar.

Coming to the question of the degree of protection that ought to be given in a case where protection is fairly warranted, it seems to me that only so high a duty should be laid as will fairly cover the difference in the cost of production here and abroad, be it in labor, raw material, or interest on capital. Such a tariff I call a low tariff as distinguished from a revenue tariff. Where a tariff tax exceeds in a material degree this measure, I term it a high tariff. It then becomes more or less prohibitive, breeds monopolies, and works injury to both the consumer and the laboring man. . . . . .

It has been the fashion of certain economists to ascribe the marvelous growth of this country for the past 25 years wholly to our tariff laws. Statistics of growth in all conceivable forms have been paraded, accompanied with the exclamation, "Behold the Tariff!" This is all pure exaggeration.

The tariff, with a multitude of other causes, all combined, have produced the magnificent result. The chief factors, however, have been our abundant supply of the most fertile lands in the world, which we have freely given away under our homestead laws, together with the immense tide of immigration, with all its capital of money and muscle. This has produced our great home market. Our oceans of land, as free as water, and the development of the same, have covered a multitude of sins, and, not least of all, some of the sins which lurk here and there in our tariff laws. . . . . .

In the face of the large, ever-growing, and threatening surplus, taken from the people by taxation and used by certain banks without any consideration therefor; and in the face of the fact that so many of the barest necessities of life are so loaded down with the highest kind of tariff taxes, it makes me sick at heart to think that there

are leading men on this side of the chamber who can find at this juncture, and under these circumstances, no other field for tax reduction than the internal-revenue taxes on spirits and tobacco. Surely these things are not the diet on which the poor laboring man keeps his family.

Worthier, better and juster, it seems to my mind, would it be to give our people—the toiling masses—cheaper food, cheaper fuel, cheaper clothing, and cheaper shelter—cheaper because released from the heavy and unnecessary bondage of high-tariff taxes. I will put free sugar, free coal, free salt, and free lumber against free whisky and free tobacco, under all circumstances, and so will the great mass of the American people.

When, in the campaign of 1892, Daniel W. Lawler, the Democratic nominee for governor, read some of these passages and then compared the principles so vigorously and well expressed, with the tariff planks of the Republican state and national platforms, which Mr. Nelson, as the Republican nominee for governor, was obliged to uphold, he placed his opponent in a very embarrassing position. If it had not been for Nelson's peculiar strength in certain quarters he would have gone down to defeat.

Before delivering his speech of March 29, Congressman Nelson had introduced a bill to remove the duty from sugar, rice, coal, salt, hemp, manila, jute and sisal grass, lumber and a few other necessities. It did not become a law, as no tariff measure by a Republican could run the gauntlet of the Democratic majority in the house.

Nelson took a very active part in obtaining the passage of the original "interstate commerce" law, delivering a strong speech in support of it before the house, January 19, 1887. Regulation of the railways also challenged his attention as a senator. He believed that the federal government was the only power or agency to deal effectively with this problem—that, while the various states might enact just and sane laws affecting the roads within their borders, the result in the country as a whole would be very unsatisfactory, due to the lack of uniformity, both in the rates and the regulations.

Incurs Wrath of Marine Journal

In the United States senate Mr. Nelson upheld the "merchant marine bill," commonly called the "Ship

Subsidy Bill," leaving his bed while sick to vote for it, but as a member of the house he took a strong stand against a measure which sought to increase the compensation paid for ocean mail service—a bill that was regarded as a species of subsidy. For his position in this instance he incurred the wrath of the New York Marine Journal, which, in August, 1888, paid its respects to him in these words:

> This representative of Minnesota in congress, who shrinks with horror from voting for any bill having for its object fair compensation for ocean mail service performed by American steamship lines, has had no qualms of conscience about engineering certain railroad bills through congress, which will redound to the interest of himself. His patriotism is of the shifty kind and is of Minnesota brand. Recently in congress he made a terrible tirade against what he calls "subsidy," showing how Norway, of which God forsaken country he is a fine specimen of native, did not subsidize shipping and was prosperous.

This was a fierce thrust, but not quite sufficient in the way of discipline, so, for good measure, the editor added this:

> Mr. Nelson, the Norwegian immigrant, who has been pitchforked into the American congress by the votes of his fellow immigrants, who infest and overrun Minnesota, should bear himself with more modesty in the country of his adoption, through whose good natured laxity in her immigration laws he is permitted to enjoy all of the privileges of a native born American citizen. It is in extremely bad taste for him to set himself up as our instructor in matters affecting our merchant marine and to hold up his wretched, poverty-stricken fatherland as an example for the United States to follow.

This spicy "roast" was reprinted in some of the Minnesota newspapers and made Nelson all the dearer, not only to Norwegians, but to other foreign born citizens as well. It was a case of an enemy doing more for a politician than a friend.

Knute Nelson was a representative from the great northwest—a new and developing section of the country, and as such he showed his practical sense by devoting most of his time and attention to legislation affecting that section. He did not seek to compete with other representatives as an authority on constitutional or international law, soaring upward to the clouds on wings of

oratory. Years afterward, while a senator, he gave more study to such questions and broadened out in his interests as a statesman, but in the beginning, as a new member of the house, he wisely concerned himself with the things that most concerned the people of his own district and the northwest.

There is general agreement, both among conservatives and "progressives," that in his six years' service in the house, Knute Nelson was a worthy representative of the people. In an address delivered at the Midway Bible conference, St. Paul, in August, 1905, Robert M. LaFollette, then governor and senator-elect, spoke these words about Nelson's record as a congressman:

> I am not here to commend or condemn your statesmen. I will say, however, in reference to Senator Nelson, when I was with him in congress, I never knew him not to have the interest of the people at heart, when he voted. He always voted with this single motive. How he is in the senate I do not know. I have not watched his career closely enough for that, but if he is the same as he was on the floor of congress, he is doing his duty.

LaFollette entered the house in 1885, serving with Nelson until 1889.

While attending the sessions of congress, Congressman Nelson resided at the National hotel, Washington. Mrs. Nelson and the children remained on the farm at Alexandria. They also remained there during his service as governor, when he made his home at the Merchants hotel, St. Paul. That was his favorite stopping place in the Minnesota capital.

Chapter X

THE THIRD INTERLUDE

Knute Nelson's political career may be likened to a stirring drama, in which there were three interludes. The first was from 1869 to 1872—from his retirement as a Wisconsin assemblyman to his election as county attorney in Minnesota. The second began with his retirement as state senator, in 1878, and continued to his election as congressman in 1882. The third and last was from 1889 to 1892, when he entered the campaign for the governorship of Minnesota. To be sure, he was regent of the university during this interim, but that did not involve active participation in politics or the affairs of government.

Political necessity led to Nelson's nomination for governor.

The Republican party was confronted by a serious menace that threatened its supremacy in the state. It was like a gathering storm, with black clouds lowering, flashes of lightning and ominous rumbling of thunder. We refer to the Populist movement, one of the most interesting phenomena in the political history of our country.

The forerunner of the People's party was the Farmers' Alliance, and the advance agent of the latter was the Greenback party, while back of the Greenback party was the Grange.

The Grange was organized in the early seventies. The farmers of the northwest felt that in the fight for prosperity, in competition with the railroads, the "wheat ring," the packers, the millers, the money lenders, the drouths, the grasshoppers and the hail storms, all of which were perniciously active, they would be completely done up unless they banded themselves together.

Said the farmer: "The trusts furnish the clothes I wear and charge me too much. The trusts manufac-

ture my implements, and they overcharge me. The trusts make my lumber, and their prices are too high. The elevator combine allows me too little for my wheat, oats and barley. The packers beat me when I sell my hogs and steers. The miller overcharges me for his flour. The bankers charge me up to twenty-five per cent interest when I borrow money, and as the dry spells, hail, grasshoppers and other pests have almost flattened me out, I have to borrow a lot."

So the Grange was formed. It had strength enough to elect W. R. Taylor, a farmer of Cottage Grove, governor of Wisconsin, and it tumbled from their pedestals several political idols. The Greenback movement was mainly a protest against the steadily mounting value of the dollar and the farmers' debts.

The Farmers' Alliance in Minnesota

The history of the Farmers' Alliance in Minnesota [writes Professor John D. Hicks of Nebraska University], is fairly typical of the whole movement, the development of which differed in the various western states in detail, but not much in kind. After beginning in a small way early in the eighties, the organization by the end of the decade had drawn to its support an enormous following, especially in the western and newer portions of the state.

The alliance at first made no pretense of entering politics as a third party; indeed, its leaders expressly denied that it had any such desire. What it did propose to do, however, was to secure legislation through the old parties, or through any available means, for the benefit of the rural classes. It interested itself especially in the selection of farmers and friends of the farmers to sit in the legislature, trusting that through their votes such laws as were needed could be passed.

As early as 1885, this policy had netted results. In that year a state railroad and warehouse commission was created, to which regulatory powers of seemingly great importance were given—powers which the legislature of 1887, even more completely under the influence of the farmers than its predecessor, was able to increase.

The Farmers' Alliance resembled in many respects the Nonpartisan League of recent years. Its members paid fees for the maintenance of the organization, for the dissemination of literature and the support of newspapers. And, like the Nonpartisan League, it aimed to be the balance of power rather than "the whole thing."

That was true of both organizations in the beginning, but in the end both abandoned this policy in Minnesota, becoming instead full-fledged political parties—the Alliance emerging in 1892 as the People's or Populist party, the League in 1922 as the Farmer-Labor party.

The farmers' attempted regulation of the railroads and the elevators proved ineffective. And moreover, as Professor Hicks puts it, "the game of controlling legislatures was one in which the farmers were not well versed, whereas their opponents had long experience. When the legislature of 1889 met, it soon became apparent that the farmers had been outplayed."

"The railroad corporations are now jubilant," mourned the Alliance leaders in a four-page pamphlet. "They have defeated for re-election to the house many of the men who defended our rights. The great newspapers are not on our side. The corporations propose to send a railroad man to the United States senate. They intend to eventually unite all the railroads of the United States into one great trust."

"This legislature," wrote P. Cudmore to Ignatius Donnelly, January 12, 1889, "will be controlled by the worst enemies of the human race and of the American people, the corporations."

Donnelly the Alliance Leader

The outstanding leader within the Alliance was Ignatius Donnelly. In 1890, he opposed the formation of a third party, just as A. C. Townley, founder and leader of the Nonpartisan League, opposed the formation of the Farmer-Labor party a few years ago. Neither Donnelly, nor any other leader, however, could long stem the third-party tide, and at a convention held in St. Paul, July 12, 1890, a full state ticket was nominated.

Donnelly desired the nomination for governor, but was set aside in favor of Sidney M. Owen, a novice in politics, but an able writer and speaker. Both the Republicans and Democrats put tickets in the field, so, at the general election, it was a triangular contest. The Alliance nominees went on the ballot as Alliance candidates,

the name Populist being used for the first time two years later.

The Republican convention renominated Governor William R. Merriam, who had succeeded A. R. McGill in 1889. The Democratic nominee was Thomas Wilson. Merriam was elected, but with only 2,267 votes to spare. The vote: Merriam, 88,111; Wilson, 85,844; Owen, 58,513; James P. Pinkham, Prohibitionist, 8,424.

The Republicans viewed the result with alarm. It boded hard sledding. In past contests they had generally polled about one-half of the votes cast. Now Merriam got only a third, while in the five congressional contests they were victorious in but one district, the second, where John Lind was given a third term.

For a party making its first bid for support, the Alliance made a remarkable showing. "The sky is luminous with promise," wrote Donnelly in his brilliant manner.

Nelson Considered by the Alliance for Governor

Knute Nelson's name had figured very extensively in the public prints in connection with the governorship and, strange to say, he was being urged by both Republicans and Alliance men. There was a general feeling among the latter that, of all men, he was the most available. He had shown rare courage and independence as a member of congress, and his stand on the tariff was in accord with the prevailing sentiment, especially in the rural communities. Also the fact that he was a farmer, who lived and acted like a farmer, tended to make his brothers of the farm feel that in him they would have a friend as governor.

The Minnesota organ of the Alliance was The Great West, published at St. Paul. Its editor was E. W. Fish, who was supposed to be quite a scholar, with the title of Ph. D., so that he figured in the political arena as "Doctor Fish." Besides being editor of the Alliance organ, he was a conductor of "Farmers' Alliance Institutes," with the title of "State Lecturer." As such, he traveled from county to county, becoming one of the best known characters in the state.

In the beginning, he and Donnelly worked in perfect harmony and with mutual admiration, but before long a fierce battle broke out between them, with the result that the Sage of Nininger launched a new party organ, The Representative, and The Great West was discredited, along with Doctor Fish, who was forced to abandon both his publication and "the cause." The Representative then had the field to itself, but survived only a few years.

As evidence of the Alliance attitude toward Knute Nelson, a letter written by Doctor Fish to the future governor, July 1, 1890, is of special significance and interest.

> Of course, you are aware of the constant reference to yourself as our candidate for governor [wrote the doctor]. We would prefer to converse with you on this matter, but it would be impossible, owing to engagements throughout the state, for me to reach Alexandria in time.
>
> We are thoroughly in favor of you as our candidate and will aid you in every way possible, provided your nomination and canvass be not made by a set of scamps who are absolutely without following, and who have betrayed the Alliance and each other over and over again, and who are in the pay and confidence of the St. Paul coterie of boodle mongers. . . . . .
>
> Under reasonable circumstances we are prepared to give $1,000 to the campaign fund, on the plan offered the executive committee, and undertake to raise $25,000 more—and will throw into the work a force which we are confident is beyond your expectations.

Nelson Refused Alliance Offer

The writer's reference to "scamps" was a thrust at R. J. Hall, president of the State Alliance. Between Hall on the one side, and Donnelly and Fish on the other, a merry war was raging. It developed later that Mr. Hall had also urged Mr. Nelson to accept the Alliance nomination, going to the trouble of visiting him at Alexandria. Nelson, however, refused the tender, making it plain that he would continue to march in the ranks of the Republican party.

So far as Donnelly was concerned, no overtures were ever made to the "Little Giant." He and Nelson had clashed repeatedly and were not mutual admirers. Donnelly wanted the nomination for himself, and when it went to Mr. Owen, after Nelson's positive declination,

he sulked in his tent. Later he overcame his disappointment, and when he was nominated and elected state senator in the subsequent campaign was again filled with enthusiasm. "The sky was luminous with promise."

The Alliance convention met in St. Paul, July 18. Notwithstanding his refusal to become a candidate, Knute Nelson received the biggest vote for governor on the informal ballot.

That ballot stood: Nelson, 104 votes; Donnelly, ninety-eight; Daniel Buck, sixty-seven; Henry Plowman, forty-two; J. H. Baker, thirty-two; T. H. Barrett, thirty; R. J. Hall, twenty-seven; J. P. Pinkham, fourteen; W. W. Braden, four; P. H. Rahilly, three; O. H. Robert, two; W. W. Erwin, two; C. Phelps, one; S. M. Owen, one.

The nomination of Mr. Owen, who started at the foot of the ladder, came after the convention had become a bitter deadlock between Donnelly and R. J. Hall.

The Republicans Also Wanted Nelson

Meanwhile a large number of country newspapers, along with the Minneapolis dailies, had been urging the elimination of Governor Merriam as the Republican standard bearer and the nomination of Knute Nelson. The feeling against the governor in Minneapolis was extremely bitter, partly because he was a St. Paul man, and partly on account of his record.

The two cities never have been known for their mutual affection, but in 1890 the "Twins" said worse things about each other than ever before or since. That was because of the alleged census frauds. Each city accused the other of padding the returns. So intense grew the feeling that a candidate who lived in St. Paul was persona non grata in Minneapolis, and a Minneapolis politician had no better standing in St. Paul.

"There can be no question but that Knute Nelson should be nominated," declared the Minneapolis Times. "A state administration under Nelson, following that of Merriam, would furnish as striking and agreeable a con-

trast in its way as that of Lincoln after Buchanan. He would be supported enthusiastically because of that knowledge and trust, and not merely because of the nomination."

The Minneapolis Tribune held that Nelson's nomination would be the best solution of the difficult problem before the Republican convention. After calling attention to the squabble between St. Paul and Minneapolis over the census, it said: "If, therefore, there is any possibility that Knute Nelson will accept the Republican nomination, the opportunity for harmony and party strength residing in such nomination ought not to be neglected by the Republican state convention."

"Knute Nelson," asserted the Minneapolis Journal, "is the strongest man, beyond all question, the party can nominate, and if he will take it, the party cannot afford to nominate anybody else." In the same article, the Journal adds that "Charley Gilman tells the Journal correspondent at St. Cloud that Mr. Nelson will take the nomination, if it is tendered him, and Gilman is in Nelson's confidence."

"There is a loud call for Mr. Nelson," recorded the Alexandria Post, "and it is to be hoped that he will yet do as Cincinnatus, leave the home industries, his farm and his office and accept a nomination for governor. No man has received a more imperative call from the people to accept office at their disposal and it is to be hoped that Mr. Nelson will yield to the demand."

The Detroit Record did not relish the suggestion that Mr. Nelson should accept the Alliance nomination. "It is not necessary for a man of Knute Nelson's reputation and acknowledged ability to go outside of his own party in order that he may be recognized. He can secure the Republican nomination for governor of this state at any time he may want the office, and what is more, he can be elected over any man who may be pitted against him. It is not necessary for him to run after a mongrel party. In short, Knute Nelson is high muck-a-muck, big mogul, chief of all the hosts of Gopherdom."

The "Scandinavian Demand"

The Republican convention met at St. Paul July 24.

There a peculiar proceeding took place. At the Merchants hotel, on the eve of the conclave, a caucus of Scandinavian delegates, with a few others participating, was held for the purpose of bringing about the nomination of a Scandinavian for governor!

The Reverend M. Falk Gjertsen, Minneapolis, presided, and Nicolai A. Grevstad, then a journalist of Minneapolis, but later editor of Skandinaven, Chicago, and United States minister to Paraguay and Uruguay, was one of the principal speakers. Frank M. Eddy, a delegate from Pope county, afterward elected to congress four successive times, was one of the participants, and was selected to voice the wishes of the gathering before the state convention.

The Scandinavian Moses that all present had in mind was, of course, Knute Nelson, and it was positively stated by Mr. Eddy that he would accept the nomination, if tendered him. He had Nelson's assurance to that effect.

The Minneapolis and St. Paul dailies carried extended reports of the caucus and, strange to say, made no disapproving comments.

The absurdity of such a meeting is apparent. Judging by their utterances, as quoted in the press, the chief actors were very much in earnest, but the drama they staged was a comedy of errors. That it was not keenly and openly resented by the convention and by the people in general is evidence of their forbearance.

Only one ballot was taken in the convention. It gave Merriam 350 votes, Nelson 74, and W. W. Braden 34. Merriam was not popular, but was a shrewd politician, in control of the party machine and with an army of appointees at his command.

Knute Nelson was not an avowed candidate for the nomination, and did not lift a finger to obtain it, but there is ample evidence that he would have accepted it, had it been forthcoming. It goes without saying that he was in no way responsible for the Scandinavian caucus

at the Merchants hotel. He did not attend the convention or go near St. Paul at the time. Where he held forth is not definitely known. One newspaper had it that he had gone on a trip to the west coast.

Nelson Championed Republican Cause

There was no little anxiety among the Republicans as to the outcome of the election. The weakness of Governor Merriam, in view of the hostility of Minneapolis —which gave him not a vote in the convention—and for other reasons, was recognized by the leaders, while the strength of the opposition was greatly feared.

What course Knute Nelson would follow kept the politicians guessing for many weeks. If he stayed out of the campaign, the opposition would capitalize that fact, would use it against the Republican candidates. If he took the stump for Governor Merriam, his speeches, said the Republican leaders, would help to stem the anti-Republican tide, hold the Scandinavians in line for the party and save it from defeat in November.

While the Alliance sympathizers made efforts to prove that Nelson was luke-warm, if not antagonistic, toward the Republican ticket, there was no basis for such a claim. It is safe to assume that the position taken by his party in Minnesota on the tariff did not meet with his approval, and in the light of his record in congress it must have been embarrassing for him to "go all down the line." Still he did that very thing at a huge Republican meeting in the Armory hall, Minneapolis, to the delight of the party's zealous defenders.

The other speakers at that meeting were Senator Washburn and Frank M. Nye, afterward congressman and district judge.

"But," remarked the Tribune, "it remained for plain, homely, but sharp and clear-headed Knute Nelson to make the speech of the meeting. He had no hesitancy in pitching straight into the tariff question. . . . He was most enthusiastically received and applauded to the echo. His speech will do great good among the people and should be read by all."

We are proud to be Republicans and have reason to be [declared the "Little Giant," as reported by the Tribune]. A party has a conscience or not, just as the individual has. He upheld the McKinley tariff bill, saying that it was better than the Mills bill, for which he had voted, and better than free trade.

I don't like the woolen and worsted clauses. They should not have been raised. But, on the other hand, look at the benefits of the sugar provisions. . . . . .

You may rightly ask why I voted for the Mills bill. I voted for it, first of all, not because I considered it a good bill, but as an expression of my opinion for a reduction of our tariff. I knew, too, that that bill could not go through as it was. I knew it would be corrected by the Republican senate and that is what it was.

And this McKinley bill. It receives my endorsement today as it never did before. I never recognized its merits till today, for the reason that I never fully understood it. I have lately studied it and I find that my own little bill and my own little speech in congress on that subject are practically endorsed, save in the one little instance of tobacco.

We can say to you in conclusion that the McKinley bill is not perfect, as there is nothing this side of the grave that is, but it is infinitely superior to the Mills bill. This is all that is necessary to reply to the Democrats in this campaign.

At the end he appealed to his fellow Republicans, and "especially his Scandinavian friends, to stand together in support of the party in the present issue. A battery in battle can do nothing without infantry support. Without it, it would be destroyed; and so in this issue, no forlorn Alliance battery can hope to accomplish anything without the support of the public infantry. The Republican party can be relied upon to meet every issue that comes up. It has always done this; it will continue to do so.

"When the people go chasing after false gods they make a great mistake."

Senator's Nelson's arguments were by no means impressive and it is apparent that he felt it incumbent upon him to offer an explanation for his support of the McKinley tariff act. Nor is that explanation very convincing. It satisfied the Republican leaders, but not the rank and file, while the leaders of the opposition, Alliance men as well as Democrats, denounced it as weak, insincere and evasive.

It is fairly certain that if he had not decided to accept

the Republican nomination for governor in the next campaign, he would not have made that explanation. It was dictated, no doubt, by political expediency, not by deep-seated convictions. But almost every prominent office-holder in the history of American politics has at times sacrificed his inmost convictions to political necessity. It is only sincere reformers, that become distinguished as champions of ideas and principles and are indifferent to office, that can always be trusted to call a spade a spade. Knute Nelson approached that ideal toward the end of his career.

Merriam's tight squeeze in November eliminated him from consideration as a candidate in the next election, and the arrows on the signboards along the political highway pointed squarely at Knute Nelson as the Republican nominee for governor in 1892.

The leaders realized that the feeling of unrest and dissatisfaction was growing and were convinced that the "Little Giant of Alexandria" was the only man to cope with the situation.

Chapter XI

THE FIRST CAMPAIGN FOR GOVERNOR

Hon. Knute Nelson retired from the practice of law this week, having sold and leased the business, books and office rooms to George L. Treat, his former partner, and Col. H. Jenkins. Mr. Nelson has been a sufferer from la grippe for three winters and of late the close confinement to the office has seriously menaced his health, and this summer he proposes to take recreation and rest. A trip south, east or to Europe are among the possibilities and a lot of work out of doors on his farm among the probabilities. Whether or not he will go back to the practice of law will depend on circumstances.

This item in the columns of the Alexandria Post in its issue of March 18, 1892, did not seem important at the time, but in the light of subsequent events, chronicled news of real significance. It gives the date of Senator Nelson's retirement from the practice of his chosen profession. He never resumed it during the thirty-one remaining years of his life. The item also shows that he wished to be foot-loose and, if necessary, far away, so that whatever happened in Minnesota would not be of his doing.

Where Nelson kept himself during the primary campaign of 1892 is not made entirely clear by the Alexandria newspapers. He did go south, as intimated in the Post, visiting some of the places where he marched, camped and fought as a soldier. He also did odd jobs about the farm and spent many an hour at the lakes fishing. Fishing was his favorite recreation, and he spent a great deal of time in his boat. He did not care very much whether he caught any fish or not; what appealed to him was the restful influence of the water, the sky and the wooded shore.

Three years before he had announced his retirement from public life. His friends on the farms, in the villages, in the editorial sanctums, had expressed their regret over his voluntary withdrawal from public life, and had likened him to Cincinnatus of old. Cincinnatus was a friend not only of his fellow countrymen, but of

the editors, orators and poets of the modern world. How delightful to have him in the background when we wish to "point a moral or adorn a tale" and pat a politician on the back for doing what few of them do at the right time—retire before they are kicked out.

But to return to the story. Knute Nelson had performed act number one of the Cincinnatus drama—he had retired. Now came the time for act number two—he must return to the fray. He would be ready for it, however, and not leave the plow to rust in the field, as Cincinnatus did.

The senator was one of the most secretive of men—by far the most secretive politician of high rank in the northwest. "When he sent for me to come down and see him," said E. E. Corliss of Fergus Falls, his one time political manager and trusted friend, "he would take me down into the cornfield and whisper in my ear, to make sure that nobody would hear him." He wrote scores of personal letters with his own hand, which his secretaries and stenographers never knew about, marked "personal and confidential." Things happened in that big brain of his which were never revealed to his most intimate friends or members of his own family. He kept the shrewdest politicians guessing as to his plans.

From a political standpoint, Nelson's voluntary retirement from congress, when everybody knew he could have continued there, was the shrewdest and wisest thing he could have done. It created profound respect for him among the people—made them think he was something more than an office-seeker. On a smaller scale his voluntary retirement from the state senate in 1878 produced the same results. In every state there are dozens of political "has-beens," who would now have a much higher rating if, after a reasonable length of service, they had retired of their own accord.

Nomination Sought Nelson

The Republican state convention met in St. Paul, July 28, with 709 delegates in attendance. Long before the trek of the politicians to the capital began, everybody

but A. R. McGill and Gideon S. Ives knew the name of the Republican nominee for governor. Mr. McGill, who had preceded W. R. Merriam as chief executive and had failed of renomination for a second term, was bidding for the honor again, and Mr. Ives, then lieutenant governor, hoped the lightning would strike him. But as soon as the various counties began holding their conventions, one delegation after the other was instructed for Knute Nelson. Ramsey county, where McGill had lived since his retirement as governor, instructed its delegation to present his name to the state convention, but, at the eleventh hour, his friends brought such pressure to bear upon him to withdraw his candidacy that he acquiesced. Mr. Ives had already yanked his hat out of the ring, so, for the first time in the history of the state a candidate for a first term as governor, before a Republican convention, was given a unanimous nomination.

On the day before the convention the future governor informed a reporter for the Minneapolis Tribune that "with the exception of a trip or two to the cities, I have not been outside of my county since the national convention at Minneapolis, nor has a man been into another at work for me, at my suggestion or to my knowledge, during the time the people have been holding their conventions in the various counties. If you had come to Alexandria to see me for political views within the past two weeks gone, you would have found me down in the field with the men, out on the farm."

"Mr. Nelson undisguisedly showed his appreciation of the remarkable endorsement plainly at hand," added the reporter.

James A. Tawney, Winona, then state senator and Republican nominee for congressman, presented Knute Nelson's name to the convention. Dr. S. G. Smith, St. Paul, announced that he would not present the name of former Governor A. R. McGill, who was "backed by the banner Republican county of the state," as the Ramsey delegation felt that they should "close up the ranks and help the party march to a triumphant vic-

tory." Frank F. Davis, Hennepin county, delivered the principal seconding speech. It was a rather rhetorical, but very eloquent effort, such as the country delegates loved to hear. An interesting feature of the convention was a seconding speech by W. R. Morris, a Negro attorney of Minneapolis, who declared that the party had selected a standard bearer upon whom all nationalities and races could unite—a statement which was warmly cheered. The last bit of convention eloquence came from the lips of Thomas F. Stevens, Marshall county, a Civil war veteran, who seconded "Corporal Nelson's" nomination in behalf of the Grand Army of the Republic. The nomination was made by a rising vote, "amid tremendous applause and cheering."

Nelson's Remarkable Speech

After the oratory had inspired the delegates, after the People's church, where the convention met, had rung with the loud applause, a committee escorted the nominee to the platform to deliver his speech of acceptance. It was a remarkable effort, containing only a few hundred words—remarkable for its cogent reasoning and clear understanding of economic questions. At a later date, Frank M. Eddy said: "If asked who is the most vigorous campaigner in the state, tell them Nelson; if asked who, since Lincoln, can best present the issues of a campaign, say Honest Knute."

Referring to the Democratic party's onslaught on the right of congress to control the election of federal officers, Mr. Nelson said: "To deny the right of the federal government to maintain and protect the purity and integrity of the federal ballot is to deny the supremacy of the federal government within the scope of the functions given it by the constitution. If the federal government cannot regulate and control a federal election, it is an abject political nonentity—at the complete mercy of the several states. Viewed in this light—and our federal constitution affords no other—the second paragraph of the Democratic platform, inasmuch as the Republican party is not seeking to control state elec-

tions, sets up a man of straw or unconsciously, as if from force of habit, reiterates the doctrine of secession."

That was a thrust at a tender spot. Then the future governor went on to characterize the Democracy's declaration on the coinage and use of silver dollars as halting and ambiguous, its plank on the tariff being alone "clear and candid."

He reserved for the new People's party his strongest blows, as if recognizing in the followers of Ignatius Donnelly his most aggressive, most dangerous adversaries:

But we are confronted with another party, lately rechristened the People's party, who, while they agree with the Democracy on the tariff issue—that bridge over which it was fondly hoped fusion might be reached—raise or suggest other issues, some of which are visionary and Utopian in character and involve organic or revolutionary changes in our system of government. Many of the leaders of this party are men who have in some way exhausted themselves in one or both of the old parties, and in the platforms, preambles and resolves, which they have now made for their followers as rules of action, they have taken strange and novel grounds.

Their first aim seems to have been to make their followers believe that the capital of the wealthier classes is nothing but plunder—plunder, ruthlessly wrenched from those who are poorer. In other words, that the poor are poor because they have been robbed, and the rich are rich because they have robbed someone. Their next aim is to impress upon their followers that this government of ours—state and national—is the most corrupt and unjust government on the face of the earth, and that the people are just as badly governed as they can be. In proof of this, I quote to you a sentence from the Omaha platform, as follows: "We have witnessed, for more than a quarter of a century, the struggle of the two great parties for power and plunder, while grievous wrongs have been inflicted upon a suffering public."

When we reflect that during this period nearly every American citizen has been a member of one or the other of these great parties, it seems strange to be told that the American people have for a quarter of a century been engaged in a grand hari-kari of self-destruction.

The chief prerequisites for the reforms planned by these leaders seem to be hatred of capital and hatred of our system of government. And what are the chief remedies presented for the ills complained of? In brief these three: Government ownership of all railways, as though nothing could be regulated or controlled unless owned; unlimited free coinage of silver, thereby under the existing disparity of value between the two metals, paying the owner of silver bullion 100 cents in coin for 70 cents' worth of silver; and, finally, last but not least, the federal

government must turn pawnbroker and set up a great national pawnshop under the so-called sub-treasury scheme.

Thus, when our government owns all the railroads, buys all the silver bullion at a big premium, and does the biggest and most unreasonable broker business known, then, and not till then, has this government of ours—founded by Washington and preserved by Lincoln—that degree of perfection contemplated by these new apostles of reform. This is not the time or place to consider these reforms in detail. I hope as the campaign progresses to take them up one by one and discuss them in detail, for I believe that when the great mass of the People's party, who, I know, are honest and wish well of the republic, come to consider these matters calmly and deliberately —come to understand them fully and realize what a great working capital the government will need to embark in so many new business enterprises—they will be as quick as any of us to abstain from doubtful or questionable methods of government.

From the standpoint of homely simplicity of utterance, compactness, clearness, force and directness, this speech is truly a masterpiece—probably in these respects the ablest of all the many speeches Knute Nelson delivered.

The Minneapolis Times, an erratic daily that changed its policy at irreglar intervals, generally consistent in its opposition to the Republican party, came out with a rather bright sally, headed "King Kanute's Conquest," the day after the convention. It said: "King Kanute rides triumphantly at the head of the Republican party in Minnesota. McGill, Ives et al, like their English ancestors, have been overcome by Kanute the Northman. King Kanute of old conquered England, and this is a sort of second conquest by Kanute II, this time of Anglo-Americans. His wave of success completely submerged his rivals and, greater than Kanute the Great, Kanute II rides the waves instead of permitting them to dash over him, but the simile can be carried out next fall, when the political waves of November will be burying their victims in the tide of oblivion."

Brilliant Campaign in State

The campaign that followed is one of the most brilliant in the history of the state. Three men of unusual ability on the stump headed the three party tickets. The

People's party had already named Ignatius Donnelly as their standard bearer, and in August, Daniel W. Lawler, St. Paul, then a young lawyer, was placed in the field by the Democrats.

Donnelly raged over the nomination of Lawler, claiming that this was some of James J. Hill's work to cut into the heavy vote which the Sage would normally receive from members of the Catholic church, particularly the Irish members. "Jim" Hill was a very handy man to have around for the spellbinders and agitators. All they had to do was to blame him for any alleged wickedness or conspiracy and it was fervently believed by a goodly portion of the electors.

The Populists were sanguine of victory. Donnelly fought for all he was worth, and his powers were great, both with the pen and on the hustings. "We are making a tremendous campaign," he wrote to "Calamity" Weller of Iowa early in the spring. "From forge and farm; from shop and counter; highways and firesides, come and hear the 'Great Commoner' on the mighty issues which are moving mankind to the ballot box in the great struggle for their rights"—thus screamed a Populist broadside, doubtless written by the Sage himself.

Donnelly realized that Knute Nelson was his chief opponent, but he did not overlook Lawler, and generously included him in a public challenge to debate the issues. Neither the "Little Norwegian" of Alexandria nor the tall Irishman of St. Paul accepted the challenge; in which they were both wise, for while either might equal or surpass him in logic, neither equalled him in brilliant oratory, in ready wit and repartee—in the vim and dash that win a popular audience, gathered for a sparring match in the political arena.

Attacks Centered on Nelson

Both Donnelly and Lawler directed their chief attacks against Nelson, for each believed that he must beat Nelson to win. Indeed, throughout the entire campaign the two Irishmen and their camp followers made common cause against the Norwegian. Their attacks were

along two lines—the inconsistency of his tariff stand and his alleged affiliations with Hill and the railroad interests. For good measure, the St. Paul Globe, the state organ of the Democracy, accused him of playing for the Scandinavian vote, shamelessly appealing to racial prejudice. It was most fortunate for the future governor that Luth Jaeger, the former editor of Budstikken, remained loyal to him. If he had handed the Globe editor those letters he received from Nelson in 1881 and 1882, now in the archives of the Minnesota Historical society, the case against the Republican nominee on this score would have been far stronger than it was.

If the Republicans believed that with Knute Nelson as their standard bearer all their troubles were over, they were grievously mistaken. He did, indeed, save them from the Populist cyclone, but there were times between August 1 and November 8 when many of them thought the clouds looked so threatening that they hunted anxiously for shelter. The Scandinavian vote which, it was supposed, Nelson carried in his hip pocket, caused any amount of trouble. The Norwegian and Swedish farmers in parts of western and northern Minnesota had gone over to the Alliance and the People's party almost to a man, and it soon became apparent they would stay there. They were not a profane people, but they swore emphatically that they would sooner vote for the Irishman, who carried the reform banner, than for a Norwegian who had betrayed the people. It was a case where blood was not thicker than water. Indeed, the Norwegians were more bitter toward Knute Nelson than they would have felt toward a Yankee, a German or an Irishman in his place.

"Belshazzar's Feast"

Unfortunately for Nelson, a little thing happened in St. Paul, which gave his political enemies evidence that he was all that they said he was—Hill's tool. The Republican candidate was at the Merchant's hotel, conferring with Mr. Hartley, St. Paul business man, Luther Mendenhall, Duluth banker, and Judge D. B. Searle, St.

Cloud, once the Republican nominee for congressman in the Sixth district. Lunch time came and Mr. Hartley invited the group to dine with him at the Minnesota club. On the way they met James J. Hill. He, too, was on his way to the Minnesota club, and Mr. Hartley invited him to join them. A most natural thing. Judge Searle, when interviewed as to the incident afterward, declared that nothing was said during lunch about "politics, religion or legal business of any nature, nor did anyone discuss politics with him" (Mr. Hill).

But, in an unguarded moment, a reporter for the St. Paul Dispatch, a good Republican newspaper, included in his "copy" for the day a little story about Knute Nelson's visit to the city and that he had dined at the Minnesota club with Hill, Hartley, Mendenhall and Searle.

"From the fury of the Northmen deliver us, O Lord," prayed the British monks over 1,000 years ago. From the fury of Doctor Fish, Donnelly, the St. Paul Globe and innumerable Populist organs and spellbinders deliver Knute Nelson, the descendant of those Northmen!

The next issue of the Great West handled the incident in masterly fashion. In the upper right-hand corner of the front page appeared in bold, black type these double-column headlines: "Knute Nelson—Betrays the People at a Babylonian Feast, with Prophets Hill and Mendenhall—How the Republican Candidate Starts Out in His Campaign—

> "Now dead is King Amulius
> Of the great Sylvan line—
> Who reigned in Alba Longa
> On the throne of Aventine.
>
> —Lord Macaulay."

Then followed a cartoon, portraying Nelson and Hill at the festal board, mouth to ear, in loving discourse, while nearby sat Judge Searle and Banker Mendenhall, with a big dollar mark on his face. On the other side of the room was a lone farmer of Douglas county, one of Nelson's farmer friends, looking anything but happy. (How that horny-handed tiller of the soil happened to stray into the Minnesota club must remain a mystery.)

What a magnificent spectacle—in this day of murder and warfare between aggressive capital and defendant labor—to see the "Grand Old Party" strike palms and smack cheeks with the Democratic party over the splendid board of the purple-clad plutocracy and listen to the gurgle-googoo of the champagne as it flows down the scarlet throats of millionaire frauds. . . . [Thus began the long story.]

There they are! Look at 'em—in the concrete, in the abstract, in the eye! Jim and Knute and D. B. And yet they tell us that Nelson is to pose as the marble Apollo Belvidere of reform—and yet the moment he is nominated, he and Railroad King Jim Hill and Banker Mendenhall of Duluth and D. B. Searle, the candidate for judge put up by Hill, go over to the splendid Minnesota clubhouse and dine for two hours!

After the devil-crabs, littleneck clams and sportive lobsters—and the wine kegs are exhausted and the plans laid, Farmer Nelson steps nimbly forth, goes to the Merchants hotel, and slobbers over his country constituents, waiting to welcome their "reform candidate!" Knute Nelson, your name is Dennis; once before, in the political history of this country, a Belshazzar's feast had been spread. And its viands were poison, its gold-thread tapestries, spider-webs to clutch and destroy the reveler.

Surely the man who wrote that earned his pay. Of course, the Populist farmers were duly impressed. Now they knew beyond peradventure just what sort of a man "Knute" was. They would be ready for him when he came around making smooth speeches, fishing for votes. The Globe gave "Belshazzar's feast" a great deal of publicity, and the lesser Populist and Democratic organs followed suit.

In its issue of August 12, the Great West devoted six columns to an attack on Nelson's railroad record in the state senate, charging that he befriended the companies and betrayed the people. His record was contrasted with that of Donnelly, who was one of Nelson's colleagues. Subsequent issues contained whole pages of anti-Nelson stuff, principally relating to his work in the state senate—apparently written by Donnelly, who, in this fashion, continued the attacks on Knute Nelson which he started back in the seventies on the senate floor.

The Homestead strike in Pennsylvania occurred that summer—one of the most memorable labor troubles in the history of America, when twenty men were killed.

This inflamed the popular mind and was capitalized for political purposes by the populist orators.

Those were the days of Mary Ellen Lease, "Sockless" Jerry Simpson, and the long-whiskered Senator Peffer of Kansas, General James B. Weaver of Iowa, H. L. Loucks of South Dakota, Robert Schilling of Milwaukee and many other noted Populist orators, usually called "calamity howlers" by the Republican press. The new faith was embodied in the national platform of the Populist party, adopted at Omaha, July 4, 1892, when General Weaver was named for president. The platform began with these lurid words: "We meet in the midst of a nation brought to the verge of moral, political and material ruin. Corruption dominates the ballot box, the legislatures, the congress and touches even the ermine of the bench. The people are demoralized."

"Claim-Jumping" Charge Revived

Just on the eve of the election, November 4, the Great West resurrected the old "claim-jumping" charge, which had lain dormant for a dozen years. Here are the double-column headlines, which were printed on the first page: "A GREAT CRIME! Knute Nelson a Claim-Jumper! He Discovers an Error in the Land Office Near Alexandria and Moves Into Town in the Night. He Takes Possession of Mr. Kilbourn's Home and Laws Him Out of It. The Claim worth $3,000 at the Time—The People Indignant and Violence Threatened."

Drowning Incident of 1886

Unbelievable things happen in politics. Accusations, which, it would seem, are too absurd for normal persons to consider even for a moment, are made against candidates and exploited with boisterous vehemence and clamor. A number of such were directed against Senator Nelson in several of his early campaigns. In the campaign of 1892, the St. Paul Globe revived an old roorback which originated in 1886. It was based on an incident which has ever since been enveloped in mist and

mystery. To clear it up, all that is necessary is to reprint the accounts of the incident published at the time in the Alexandria newspapers. On October 14, 1886, the News contained the following:

On Monday afternoon Hon. Knute Nelson went out to Lake Victoria, about a mile and a half from his home, to spend a few hours fishing. He went alone and nothing more was heard of him until a few minutes after dark, when Mr. Christian Hanson, who lives half a mile from the lake, heard a cry for help. He immediately ran to the shore and found that Mr. Nelson's boat was there, having drifted in, and Mr. Nelson was calling for help, as he supposed, from the opposite shore. Mr. Hanson lost no time rowing across the lake, which is half a mile wide at this point, but as he neared the shore, he heard a faint call behind him. He turned back and found Mr. Nelson struggling in the water. After several attempts he managed to get the now exhausted man into the boat and rowed him ashore. He then ran to the house, hitched up his team and brought Mr. Nelson to town, and in a few minutes he was in the hands of Drs. McEwen, Boyd and Ward, and Dr. C. B. Brown of Sycamore, Ill. They had him conveyed to the Letson house and went to work to revive him. Only a faint pulsation could be detected in the throat, and after an hour and a half of hard work respiration was established, and about 12 o'clock he was put to bed. Tuesday morning he was rational and talked freely of the accident. He says that after falling out of the boat he tried to regain it, but soon lost sight of it in the darkness, and after swimming for some time lost consciousness. As near as we can judge, he must have been in the water fully three-quarters of an hour.

Mr. Nelson was removed to his home Tuesday morning, where he will probably be confined for some time, but no serious consequences are anticipated. It was indeed a most miraculous escape from death.

A dispatch to the city dailies gave these particulars as to how the accident happened: "He (Nelson) was fishing out of a boat, caught a large pickerel, stood up, lost his balance and fell overboard. Although a good swimmer, his clothes bothered him, so he could not regain the boat. His involuntary struggles kept him above the water and his cries for help brought Christian Hanson, who lives half a mile from the lake."

This happened a few weeks before the election of that year. Mr. Nelson had been a delegate to the Republican state convention and had led the fight for the nomination of his good friend, Charles A. Gilman of St. Cloud, for governor. Mr. Gilman was defeated and A. R.

McGill of St. Peter carried off the honor. It was claimed that Mr. Nelson was "sore" over the result, that he did not like to take the stump for Mr. McGill and, to find an excuse for staying out of the campaign, faked a drowning accident. Once started, this absurd yarn spread over the state in ever-widening circles, changing its character from day to day as it spread from village to village. If Senator Nelson had been an idiot, or a lunatic, he might have resorted to such tactics to keep himself out of the campaign. Certainly a man of some intelligence could have hit upon an easier, less dangerous, less sensational method.

But, it has been suggested, he never was in the lake at all! That suggestion is even more preposterous. With four doctors working to revive him, with numerous citizens of the village present, how can such a theory be entertained? And yet, after six years, this roorback was revived by one of the great dailies of the state in an effort to belittle, if not defeat, a former congressman, a veteran of the Civil war, who had been nominated for governor by the chief political party of the state.

Nelson's Active Campaign

Knute Nelson did not take his election for granted and the campaign he waged was a duplicate of his fight for congress in 1882. He began speaking toward the end of August and held meetings once a day or oftener to the end of the campaign. The first big rally, at which he appeared, was in Minneapolis, on the night of August 26. The meeting, held at the old Armory hall, was preceded by the inevitable torch-light parade. Senator W. D. Washburn presided and gave the candidate what was described as a "happy introduction." The senator told how, on his visit to Voss, Norway, the preceding year, a little dwelling on a mountain side had been pointed out to him, from a distance, as the birthplace of the "next governor of Minnesota."

Feeling ran high in many counties, especially in the Populist strongholds. Most of the Republican speakers preferred to keep away from such places, but Mr. Nel-

son was more than willing to go. In fact, he preferred speaking in a country town to farmers and the "commoners" to addressing the "high-brows" and the "low-brows" of the cities. He was the right sort of man to cope with a hostile audience. His information on political and economic problems covered a very wide range, because of his intensive study, so, no matter what questions were hurled at him by irate Populists and cunning Democrats, he was ready with an effective answer. It was in exchanges of this kind—unforeseen clashes—that Nelson was at his best. Interruptions did not confuse him—merely stimulated his mental faculties. Many are the stories told about hecklers coming to grief at his hands, and great was the glee of his backers when they met on street corners the next day to talk it over.

The Elbow Lake Incident

At Elbow Lake occurred an incident which still lives in the political annals of the state. It started as a verbal clash, but ended in a physical encounter, followed by Mr. Nelson's arrest.

It is difficult to get at the exact facts in this matter, as the newspaper reports are so conflicting, and so is the testimony of persons who were present and are still alive to tell the tale. It was on the night of October 25, 1892. Nelson was speaking in the courthouse, packed with business men and other townspeople, most of whom were Republicans or Populists from the farms. Among the latter was a big fellow named Tobias O. Sauby of the town of Pomme de Terre. He was one of the Norwegians that did not like Knute Nelson and made no bones about it.

Here is a story of the clash, based on the report of Mr. Sargent, solicitor for the Minneapolis Tribune at the time, and W. E. Landene, both of whom were at the meeting:

During the speech, Mr. Nelson was showing the rate of wages paid here, when a gentleman named Bakken asked, "Do you think this is due to the tariff?" to which Nelson replied that it was, in part. Nelson then asked several questions as to the rate of wages here and

in Norway, and the manner of living in both countries, the food the people had, etc., and not receiving replies, he answered them himself. During this time he was frequently interrupted by the man Sauby with laughing, talking and cries of "rats." It is also reported that Sauby pinched his dog's tail, at least the dogs near him in the hall yelped as if hurt. The police and sheriff had gone out to quiet a disturbance outside the hall.

Mr. Nelson continued speaking, and gesticulated with his open hand, and his finger extended. Sauby said, "What are you pointing at me for? I didn't ask you the question."

Nelson replied that the fame of the Pomme de Terre ring had reached him before. Then Sauby commenced a series of remarks in a loud voice, saying he wanted to have things fair, and finally made such a disturbance that Nelson told him to shut his mouth. The chairman tried also to have Sauby sit down and keep still. After much provocation, Nelson stepped down and grabbed Sauby by the coat collar and one ear and shook him.

The meeting then continued to the close without further interruption. Sauby had been making many who sat near him laugh before, but did not feel so funny after being shaken up by the next governor of the state."

That appeared in the News of Alexandria and was probably as accurate an account as any published at the time. It was a Republican version, however, and must be read with that fact in mind.

Here is the Globe's account, headlines and all:

Choked by Nelson—Disgraceful Conduct by the Republican Leader at Elbow Lake—He First Insults a Man and Then Tries to Shut Off His Wind. Elbow Lake, Minn., Oct. 26.—Whipping them into line has grown to be an old song with the Republicans, and now Knute Nelson has introduced a new method of choking them into the harness. He choked a man at his meeting here last night, and now a warrant is out for his arrest for the offense. It has created a great deal of excitement in this vicinity and has certainly lost the Republican party a great many votes. The fact is Nelson sees defeat staring him in the face, and it has made him so irritable that he can scarcely be decent.

That was good for a starter. Two days later followed this editorial comment: "Would it not be a distressing condition of affairs if Knute Nelson should be elected governor of Minnesota and take it into his executive head some fine day to 'lick' somebody who disagreed with him in that inner sanctum at the state capital, hallowed by four years of the courteous presence of Wil-

liam R. Merriam and his resinous secretary, Tamarack Bixby."

The Pioneer Press, the Tribune and the rest of the Republican dailies came to Knute Nelson's defense in loyal style. Here are the headlines over the Tribune's dispatch: "Knute Is a Dandy—He Promptly Squelches an Obnoxious Populist—Big Fellow Cowed—No Assault as Claimed by the Globe—Worked by the Democrats—They Use the Incident for Campaign Capital."

The incident became a red hot issue in the campaign, eclipsing for a time the tariff, the railroads, the corporations, "Jim" Hill and the wheat ring. The Democrats and the Populists were horrified at the idea of elevating such a man as Knute Nelson to the governorship of a great state, while the loyal Republicans stoutly declared that it was just such a courageous, strong-willed man that the commonwealth needed in the executive office.

M. P. Thune, a deputy in the office of the sheriff of Hennepin county, gives this version of the incident: "I was present at the meeting. Along with other boys, I was sitting right in front of Nelson, down below the railing. In the course of his speech, Mr. Sauby called Nelson a liar. A little later he repeated the offensive name and in a second we boys saw Nelson swing down from the platform, over our heads, making straight for Sauby, with the chairman vainly trying to hold him back by the coat tail. Nelson grabbed Sauby by the shoulders, shook him violently, while telling him to behave, and then went back to resume his speech. The hall was packed and there was intense excitement, but no other violence."

This account is not borne out by some of the citizens of Elbow Lake who were at the meeting. Mr. Goetzinger, Grant county judge of probate, and Mr. Stromme, merchant, agree that Mr. Sauby did not interrupt Senator Nelson and did not call him any names.

"Mr. Sauby," said Mr. Goetzinger, "was sitting directly in front of Mr. Bakken and it was Bakken, not Sauby that kept on heckling Nelson until he lost his temper. The senator was not in good humor, the air

being rather foul and hot, and the noise in the back of the room and outside had got on his nerves. Evidently he singled out the wrong man in the crowd for punishment, and it was fortunate for Nelson that Mr. Sauby was a good-natured fellow, slow to get angry, and that he was holding one of his babies in his arms, so that he could not defend himself, when Nelson laid hands on him. Sauby was a powerful man and a trained athlete, unusually quick with his hands and feet, and Nelson would have been no match for him, even though a strong man himself. As I said, Mr. Sauby was slow to wrath, and it was not until after the meeting that he got angry."

The day after the meeting, Mr. Sauby swore out a warrant for Mr. Nelson's arrest, as the Globe dispatch stated. The local weekly, the Herald, charged that he was prompted to this by designing Democrats, who saw an opportunity to embarrass their ancient enemies, the Republicans. The charge was "assault and battery." Meanwhile, Mr. Nelson had left the field of battle for Ashby, where he spent the day with friends, going from there to Dalton in the evening to address another meeting. The plotters expected to arrest him just as the meeting opened, but were outwitted, for the Republican leaders at Fergus Falls had got wise to the plan, and Elmer Adams drove down to Dalton to give Mr. Nelson warning.

He found the future governor in K. H. Brandvold's store, chatting with old friends, with whom he used to visit in the seventies, while driving through from Alexandria to Fergus Falls as a frontier lawyer. Mr. Nelson immediately proposed that the best way to frustrate the designs of the enemy was to beat a hasty retreat into the country and there remain until enough of his Republican friends had gathered at the hall to control the situation and prevent the meeting from being broken up by his arrest.

"He scolded most of the time during the drive (into the country), and his final injunction to me was not to say anything about this incident at Elbow Lake," says

Mr. Adams. "I left him and drove back to Fergus Falls in the cold, wondering what to do."

What troubled Mr. Adams was that Tams Bixby, chairman of the Republican state central committee, had been wiring him for Nelson's version of the Elbow Lake affair for publication in the Republican dailies to offset the sensational stories in the Globe and the Times of Minneapolis. He finally decided to wire St. Paul his own version of the affair, "the kernel of which was that when the obstreperous farmers tried to break up the senator's meeting, he used the same courage that he had shown on the field of battle in the Civil war and maintained order in his meeting." When Mr. Nelson reached Fergus Falls the next day, he had read Mr. Adams' dispatch in the Twin City papers and pronounced the job he had done high grade and thanked him heartily.

"This incident," observes Mr. Adams, "shows a certain phase of the senator's character, which was, that when anything unpleasant happened, to always tell the newspaper men not to make any mention of the incident or try to put it in its right light. They often ignored his injunctions and went ahead, and he always commended them for it afterward."

The warrant was served on Mr. Nelson at the close of the Dalton meeting by Constable Caldwell of Ashby. Two good Norwegian Republicans, K. N. Melby and J. O. D. Madland, promptly stepped up and signed a bond for $200 as sureties for the future governor's appearance before Justice H. K. Harrison in Pomme de Terre, November 15, 1892.

From the Grant County Herald, November 17, 1892: "The assault and battery case against Governor-elect Nelson has been dismissed. County Attorney Scofield and Tobias O. Sauby appeared before Justice Harrison yesterday, and on their motion the case was consigned to oblivion."

The "case" may have been thus consigned, but the incident itself has passed into history. It is a vital part of the Knute Nelson chronicle, shedding interesting light on the true character of the man, just as Andrew Jack-

son's numerous duels and fierce encounters help us to visualize that famous man. The "Saga of Knute and Tobias" proves that the senator had a temper that was not to be trifled with. He controlled it, except under extreme provocation. Then it burst forth with genuine Viking fury. Then the blood rushed to his face and his blue eyes flashed with a dangerous glitter.

During the last two or three years of his life, it was harder for the senator to control his temper, and many stories are related of stormy interviews between him and other statesmen in Washington. But that was after old age and worry had weakened his health, and it is not fair to judge him by those outbursts.

The Republican Herald at Elbow Lake predicted a big increase in Nelson's vote in Grant county as a result of the famous incident, and the Pioneer Press of St. Paul and the Tribune of Minneapolis were confident that by his courage and effective handling of a difficult situation the Viking candidate for governor had added thousands of votes to his already huge total. The vote in Grant county was: Nelson, 790; Lawler, 303; Donnelly, 194; Dean, ninety-six.

"My, but Knute Nelson was a powerful man when at his best," said O. J. Sessing, Robbinsdale, Minnesota, recently. "I was at one of his meetings in South Minneapolis—I think it was in 1880. He spoke in a hall over a saloon and there were a number of drunks in the crowd, one of whom had it in for Nelson. He was a big Norwegian—his name was Johnson. Nelson stood on a platform several feet high. Johnson came up and grabbed him by the leg and tried to pull him off the platform. Knute took Johnson by the collar with one hand, held him at arm's length and went right on speaking until they came and got Johnson. The big fellow was helpless in Knute's iron hand."

Nelson was elected governor on the eighth of November, with 14,620 votes to spare. That was not a large plurality, but a great deal larger than Merriam's in 1890 and 1888. The totals follow: Nelson, 109,220; Lawler, 94,600; Donnelly, 39,863; Dean, 12,239. Nelson's

vote was not quite 40 per cent, a material increase over Merriam's percentage in 1890. The showing made by Donnelly was very disappointing to his followers, while that of Lawler was brilliant. What would have happened to the Republican nominee if the Democrats and Populists had been able to fuse, as leaders in both parties hoped, is not so easy to determine. While the combined vote of Lawler and Donnelly exceeded Nelson's by 25,243, it must not be supposed for a moment that all of Donnelly's votes would have gone to Lawler or all of Lawler's to Donnelly, or that all the supporters of each would have backed up another fusion candidate. Nelson would have drawn from each faction and might have been elected.

Many of the rural precincts in the old Fifth congressional district, which gave Nelson such overwhelming majorities in his race against Kindred, were now almost as unanimous against him. The township of Norwegian Grove, for instance, which gave him every one of its votes in 1882, now could spare him but a handful. Not a few of the rural precincts of his home county were among the ungenerous. Douglas county as a whole, however, gave him a large majority, his vote being 1,303; Donnelly's, 601; Lawler's, 434, and Dean's, 234.

More Rejoicing at Alexandria

As in 1882, so in 1892, there were bonfires, a torchlight procession and band music in honor of Knute Nelson at Alexandria. The long procession escorted him from his home to Brown's opera house, where Senator C. J. Gunderson acted as chairman and introduced a rather formidable array of speakers, including Colonel H. Jenkins and Reverend G. E. Soper, Alexandria, E. J. Scofield, Elbow Lake, E. E. Corliss, Fergus Falls, and Frank M. Eddy, Glenwood. Perhaps the biggest "hit" of the evening was made by Mr. Scofield when he said:

"I knew Mr. Nelson would be governor in fact. Everybody in Elbow Lake knew it, not the least among them being Tobias Sauby."

A notable sentence was this, from Mr. Corliss:

"When I came through here in 1871 and met Mr. Nelson, I knew he would make his mark, as he was not too low to be out of place anywhere and not too high to be out of touch with the people."

I was loth to enter the campaign [said Mr. Nelson, in part], but after the first smell of powder, I was confident of the result. Never did I make any unkind personal allusions to my opponents and never replied to any of their attacks. It was a campaign of education. Never was there one where so little money was used. The newspapers took hold from principle, without price, and fought it out on that line. This is as it should be. During the last week a certain labor organization sought to make me pledged to them by signing a certain paper to support certain measures. I declined to mortgage myself, and I go unpledged. I will make it my highest ambition to fulfill the duties of chief executive of this state so that when I lay down the office I can have you feel as proud of me then as you do now. I want you to be willing to come to me with your opinions and wishes, as I want to serve you all and do right.

In explanation of Mr. Nelson's reference to a labor organization, the Post said that it was a railroad organization and cost him over fifty votes in Alexandria, "as about a hundred men, more than half of them voters of Alexandria, were run out of town on a work train in the morning, expecting to come in at noon to vote, but were held out until after the polls closed by the Great Northern officials of higher or lower degree."

Chapter XII

GOVERNOR OF MINNESOTA

Knute Nelson was the twelfth governor of Minnesota, serving from January 4, 1893, to January 31, 1895. At the time of his inauguration, he was about fifty years old and entered upon his new duties at the height of his powers. His physical vigor was unimpaired; his judgment had been seasoned and tempered by the strenuous political struggles of which he had been the center, by his work as a lawyer, leader and legislator. His mind was stored with practical knowledge, as well as sound theories of government. He knew how things are done in capitols, how the machinery works, what problems confront the head of the state government—cunning interests seeking special privileges by devious methods, other interests working openly, boldly and sometimes defiantly, cranks with hobbies and innumerable candidates for appointive offices.

It is related that when Grover Cleveland was installed as president in 1885, thousands of southerners, who had stayed away from Washington since the beginning of the rebellion, flocked to the White House to shake hands with the first Democratic president after Buchanan.

As Mr. Nelson was the first Norwegian to serve as chief executive of Minnesota, hundreds of Viking descendants, who never before thought of calling on the governor while in St. Paul, did not fail to pay their respects to "Knute" and shake his hand. That gave them intense satisfaction.

Both as governor and senator, Knute Nelson showed his strength of character and good sense by not making promises which he knew he could not keep. The rule he laid down with respect to his announcement as a candidate for congressman in 1882—to make it as short as possible so as not to promise too much—he rigidly adhered to all through his long career. Perhaps no gov-

ernor of Minnesota fared better in the matter of appointments. No applicant for a job ever accused him of breaking his word.

Nelson's Inaugural Address

Mr. Nelson's inaugural address, delivered January 4, 1893, was rather short, containing about 4,000 words. It remarked that the financial affairs of the state were sound and prosperous. With a population of 1,400,000 and an assessed valuation of $600,000,000, there was an indebtedness of only $2,154,000, while there was a balance of $1,688,946.54 in the state treasury. The governor pointed with gratification to the fact that there had been a decrease in the prison population. He called special attention to the establishment of a twine factory in the state prison, which was being successfully operated and was proving beneficial to the farmers of the state. He declared that he was satisfied with the weighing, grading and inspection of grain as operated under the law, but urged regulation of elevators and warehouses.

He advocated a gross earnings tax on certain classes of corporations and strongly urged that the burdens of government upon the farmers should be made lighter, and that economy should be practiced wherever possible, without injury to public institutions. His interest in the state university, particularly the agricultural college, was shown in the passage quoted in a preceding chapter.

Important Legislation Enacted

The legislature of 1893 was controlled in both branches by the Republicans, and some beneficial legislation was enacted. State inspection of all country elevators was provided, along the lines recommended by Governor Nelson. Farmers were empowered to erect independent elevators on the railroad right of way, and the railroad companies were compelled to furnish side-track facilities. Doubtless as a concession to the farmers of radical tendencies, the legislature appropriated $200,000 for the purchase of a site for a state-owned elevator at Duluth, which was to have a capacity of

1,500,000 bushels and was to be equipped for weighing, unloading and safeguarding grain in separate bins and for placing grain of the same grade together. For this service a minimum fee of fifty cents per 1,000 bushels or carload, and twenty-five cents for weighing, was to be charged. The state elevator was to be under the supervision and management of the state railroad and warehouse commission, which was to issue weekly bulletins as to market prices in the principal markets of the world. This act, however, was set aside as unconstitutional by the supreme court of the state, and no state elevator was ever erected.

The most important labor legislation provided for safeguards about dangerous machinery, and placed manufacturing and other establishments, employing large numbers of laborers, under the state bureau of labor. An act submitting to the people an amendment to the state constitution authorizing a tax on inheritances, devises, legacies and gifts, was passed and ratified at the next general election.

It was at this session that the legislature passed a bill providing for a new capitol, and Governor Nelson appointed the commission that had full charge of building the present magnificent state house. That he selected an excellent commission is shown by the record they made. The cost to the state was $4,500,000, and there has never been an intimation of graft or laxness in the handling of the gigantic work involved. Provision for a state Soldiers' home was also made by the legislature.

A law was enacted authorizing a county, township, city or village, by a vote of its electors, to bond itself for a sum not exceeding five per cent of the assessed valuation of its property, to aid in the improvement or construction of canals and waterways. Governor Nelson took a lively interest in the drainage of swamp lands in the Red river valley and other parts of the state, and the legislation enacted during his administration served a useful purpose along this line.

In liquor legislation, an act was placed upon the statute

books prohibiting the issuing of licenses for the sale of liquor to other than bona fide residents of the state. For the purpose of checking ticket scalping, a law regulating the sale of railway tickets was enacted.

All of these measures had Governor Nelson's approval. That he was very much in earnest in the interest of economy is shown by his veto of a bill increasing the number of Legislative Manuals, the so-called "Blue Books," which the secretary of state is authorized to issue at each biennial session. The amount involved was only some $3,000, but the governor considered it unnecessary and killed the bill. As every member of the legislature dearly loves to distribute a goodly number of Blue Books among his friends at home, the chagrin over the executive veto must have been genuine.

The Hinckley Forest Fire

A local event of tragic consequence, that occurred during the administration of Governor Nelson, was the Hinckley forest fire. This disaster resulted in the destruction of Hinckley and eight other villages, the devastation of about 400 square miles of timber, the destruction of personal property, approximately $750,000 in value, and the death of 413 men, women and children. The tragedy occurred on the first of September, 1894.

Governor Nelson took immediate steps to relieve the situation in the stricken community. He appointed a committee to receive and disburse funds, food and clothing. The men named were Charles A. Pillsbury, Minneapolis, chairman; Kenneth Clark, Charles H. Graves, Matthew C. Norton and Hastings H. Hart. The treasurer of this committee, or commission, acknowledged the receipt of $96,458.69 in cash donations. Local relief committees received and distributed $23,565.74, and it is estimated that altogether the value of the relief furnished to the sufferers was $184,744. The promptness and efficiency with which Governor Nelson acted was widely recognized.

Labor Troubles

Largely owing to the "hard times," which prevailed during Governor Nelson's administration, there were serious industrial disputes in Minnesota as well as elsewhere. Strikes occurred in the cities of Minneapolis, St. Paul and Duluth, also at St. Cloud and other labor centers. Nelson refused to permit any violence and was firm in the maintenance of law and order. The strikers did not love him, charging that he took sides with the "capitalists." The same charge was made against President Cleveland, when he ordered federal troops to Chicago at the time of the great railroad strike in which Eugene V. Debs sprang into fame.

Governor Nelson's position was that labor and capital have equally a right to go on a strike, if not satisfied with existing conditions, but neither can use illegal methods. Of course, in the heat of battle, each side sees "red," each forgets when it violates the law and, when disciplined by the men charged with the enforcement of law and the maintenance of order, charges unfairness or lack of sympathy.

Governor Nelson took a deep interest in the problems presented by the labor troubles and dealt with them in his biennial message to the legislature of 1895, as follows:

> Recent labor strikes, prolonged and extensive, strongly suggest the importance of enacting suitable laws for the conciliation or arbitration of disputes between capital and labor in some tribunal or before some board designated by law. Inasmuch as both capital and labor have the undoubted right to make a peaceable strike, compulsory arbitration is not warranted and would be unwise. But in most cases, if a proper tribunal with judicious safeguards were provided, capital and labor would both be disposed to voluntarily submit their controversies to arbitration. And the tide of public opinion would, in such cases, not only impel the parties into such a court, but would make its decrees respected and obeyed. He who would refuse to arbitrate, or, having submitted to arbitration, would refuse to accept the result, would forfeit all public approval and would, in the outcome and in one form or another, have to submit.
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> His interest in the welfare of the unemployed he showed in the following: In the presence of so much idle labor needing the assistance of public and private charity, it would be proper to consider the wisdom of giving our various municipalities more enlarged powers to

raise and expend funds in the construction of water works, sewerage, streets, parks, electric lights and other essential urban facilities, to the end that such public improvements could be made in a manner to afford labor to those who without such labor would have to rely on charity of some kind for their support. The object of such legislation should not be to authorize needless improvement, but to give the needy unemployed the preference in obtaining municipal work, which they do not have under the ordinary contract system.

Second Campaign for Governor

As the campaign of 1894 drew near, it was apparent that Governor Nelson would be renominated. Former Governor McGill, the perennial candidate, again erected his lightning rod, but before the Republican convention assembled in St. Paul, July 11, he saw the handwriting on the wall and withdrew, with the result that Mr. Nelson was again named by acclamation. While the governor had given the state an able administration and had conducted himself in a way that appealed to the average man, still the hard times, the labor disturbances and the unrest made the political situation rather dubious, and the "Little Giant" again waged an aggressive campaign, speaking in all parts of the state, devoting special attention to the "enemy's country."

It was in this campaign that he delivered what is generally regarded as the ablest of all his political speeches —that at Argyle, Minnesota, July 28. It was printed in pamphlet form by the Republican state committee and was circulated, not only in Minnesota, but also in other states. Even Ignatius Donnelly conceded its strength. "The speech is a good one," said he in the Representative, August 8, 1894. "It is a careful, laborious, plausible address, well put together. The governor is an eminent lawyer. His profession trains him to make the worst appear the better reason. It is fair to presume that he said, and well said, all that can be said in behalf of his party. His own future success in life depends upon its triumph in Minnesota this year—he has therefore strained every nerve to produce what he considers an unanswerable document. And we are gratified to

observe that he does not indulge in abuse or ridicule of his opponents, except to the slightest degree."

The Argyle speech is characteristic of Nelson's addresses. It contains a good deal of history and even more figures, or statistics. As a speaker, his purpose, it seems, was to instruct rather than to amuse, sway or inspire. His appeal was to the reason, not the emotions. On that account, he was not ranked among the "popular orators," and as a rule only the more elderly, serious-minded people really enjoyed to listen to him for any considerable time. Nor was his voice that of a fascinating orator. It had a rather harsh, metallic ring —not the melodious organ tones of the voice of William Jennings Bryan or William Freeman Vilas, nor the appealing chimes of the voice of Henry Clay. But when aroused by the unexpected onslaught of a hostile heckler in the audience, he was dramatic, interesting, powerful. Again, when he addressed a rather small audience in a small hall—an audience of friends, comfortably seated and not eager for excitement—he was both instructive and charming. His voice lacked the strength to fill a great hall, but was of suitable pitch and tenor for a calm, deliberate address to an audience of 500 or 1,000.

The quality of grace, so fascinating in some public characters, whether orators, actors or musicians, was lacking in Senator Nelson. The late John C. Freeman, professor of English literature in the University of Wisconsin, in discussing this wonderful quality in some men, once said: "It was worth $5.00 to see Ole Bull walk across the stage and bow to the audience before he touched the strings of his violin." In that class, brusque, strong, dignified Knute Nelson did not belong.

The Famous Argyle Speech

Hard times and industrial and economic depression, in various forms and from various causes, have been in our midst during the past 16 months [began Governor Nelson in his Argyle address]. In the wake of these times, and as an incident thereto, are a number of "I told-you-so" reformers who have an easy, flippant and demagogic way of diagnosing and accounting for all our troubles and all our ailments, and who have no difficulty at all to suggest and tender,

in connection with their own personal services, a variety of reforms of a social and economic character as a swift and sure relief for all industrial congestion and stagnation. It is the aim of these reformers, first of all, to breed as much alarm, suspicion and distrust as possible and to array class against class, poor against rich and capital against labor, and above all, to make our farmers restless with the idea that they are now suffering chiefly from the oppressions of the other classes of society, especially from those who have accumulated more than the average level of wealth and are therefore termed capitalists. It is assumed that all other classes have combined to despoil and impoverish the farmer, that he has been the neglected stepson of organized society, on whom tribute has been levied without stint or reason. It is assumed that while most other classes have been prosperous to a greater or less degree, the farmer has not prospered at all, but, on the contrary, has become more and more impoverished, and that he is today a mere serf at the foot of the economic ladder. It is assumed that this deplorable condition thus assigned to the farmer is wholly the offspring of economic and financial legislation hostile to him and calculated especially to enrich the so-called capitalists.

Thus he laid the foundation for his address. Then he proceeded to show how the changed conditions in America since 1860 had placed the farmers in a different situation. Before 1860, the farmers were a majority of our people, while in 1894 they were a small minority. In the early days they were more self-dependent; now their fortunes are closely linked with the industrial classes, dependent upon the railroads and upon the purchasing power of the people off the farms.

The recent strikes have demonstrated how entirely dependent we are upon the transportation facilities of our railroads. It was fortunate for our farmers that the strikes did not occur at a time when the crops were to be sold and marketed. Had they occurred at that time and continued for a considerable length, much hardship and distress would have been the result. The capital, which built our railroads and established our great manufacturing enterprises and furnished work for thousands of worthy and industrious laboring men, was not capital abstracted or withdrawn from agricultural pursuits, nor capital raised by taxation or government loans, but capital gathered from the surplus funds of people from all over the world, some of them very rich, many of them of moderate or limited means. This capital, when it came, came as an investment and not in any spirit of hostility, for it depended for its reward, more than any other capital, upon the general prosperity of the entire country . . . .

Now what good can be accomplished, what immediate and substantial relief can be obtained by arraying the farmers against the

capital which has developed the railroads and our manufacturing establishments? Capital may become tyrannous and, so too, may labor. But neither the one nor the other should therefore be suppressed. Legislation has not been framed, as is alleged, in a spirit hostile to the farmers.

After pointing out the reasons for the sad condition among the farmers of the Red River valley, to whom in particular he addressed himself—those reasons being an over-supply of wheat and a gutted foreign market—he directed attention to the prosperity of the farmers of Freeborn county, who had already gone over to dairying and diversified farming, and declared that when the farmers of the Red River valley cease to depend chiefly upon wheat, and diversify their interests, they will be less at the mercy of chance and misfortune.

The second half of the speech was devoted to the money question, which had crowded the tariff off the boards as the chief issue among the people, the Free Silver Bureau of Colorado with a notable array of western senators, representatives and other orators, having inaugurated a tremendous campaign for the unlimited coinage of silver at the ratio of sixteen to one. Governor Nelson stood with his party firmly—more firmly than many Republican leaders—against this proposition. He held that it would result in silver monometalism, instead of bimetalism, and would prove extremely detrimental to the best interests of the people.

The commercial or intrinsic value of the silver dollar [said he] is today hardly fifty cents of the gold dollar, and it is current only and received as equivalent to the gold dollar because you can, at all times, exchange or convert it into the latter. And this is what we understand by the term interconvertible. If a fifty-cent silver dollar can at all times be converted into a hundred cents gold dollar, we are all as anxious to receive silver as gold. But to keep up this state of interconvertibility there must not only be a law for it, but the actual ability to maintain it must exist. And today the United Sates is possessed of both these qualities. We have the law and we have a gold dollar for every silver dollar in existence. In other words, we float our silver currency with a gold redemption fund. France does the same thing. She is today floating a $700,000,000 silver currency with $800,000,000 in gold. Last year the equilibrium of the two metals was threatened. The owners of silver bullion

sold the same to the federal government and received in exchange therefor treasury notes under the act of 1890, and then, as though doubting the ability of the government (an incident of the change of administration), they at once procured the redemption of these notes in gold and this gold was in its turn hurried out of the country to Europe, for various purposes, especially to aid Austro-Hungary to place itself, like the rest of Europe, on a gold basis. This great outflow of gold was threatening the interconvertibility of the two metals and was fast drifting us into a state of silver monometalism, or exclusive silver circulation. The gold was rushing out of the country faster than the silver was rushing into the treasury. This threw the financial and business world into a panic. Money disappeared from circulation and went into hiding. It was as hard for the rich to borrow money as for the poor. Under these conditions, and to relieve the tension, distrust and alarm, congress repealed the purchasing clause of the Sherman law—that feature requiring the goverment to purchase every month 4,500,000 ounces of silver. This was not the demonetization of silver. It was, in effect, merely the temporary suspension of silver coinage, or the enlargement of our silver currency. It was for the purpose of keeping up the equilibrium of the two metals and keep them from running away from each other. . . .

The moment a silver dollar is not convertible into a gold dollar, silver, now, as in the early days of our nation, will entirely usurp the place of gold and drive the latter out of circulation and into hiding. This would reduce us to a state of silver monometalism, a state of exclusive silver circulation. . . . We would all suffer and be oppressed, except the owners of silver mines and silver bullion. They would reap a big harvest, but it would be at the expense of all the rest of us—of the entire country. . . . .

A free coinage, which sustains and upholds bimetalism, is desired by all friends of good government and honest money. A free coinage, which would at one fell blow strike down bimetalism and reduce us to a state of silver monometalism, is not desired by anybody, except the most extreme inflationists and the owners of silver mines and silver bullion. The farmers of this country have no silver to sell or to coin, and theirs would not be the inflation harvest.

At the end the speaker drew his conclusions—pointed out the reason, by a specific instance, why some communities had plenty of money and were prosperous, while other communities had little or no money and were in distress.

The same currency [said he] buys a bushel of wheat at fifty cents and a bushel of potatoes at the same price. At this figure, wheat is very cheap and potatoes very high. The one product is over-plentiful, the other over-scarce. And this makes the difference, not the volume

or the quality of the currency. There is an undoubted lack of currency among our farmers in many localities, especially in the upper country, but this lack comes, not from a scarcity of money in the state or nation, but from the lack of product to exchange for money. Compare the counties of Freeborn and Polk, if you please. In the former, with twenty townships of land, 18,000 people, twenty-four creameries and a great amount of dairy products, a large number of cattle, horses, sheep and hogs and an advanced system of diversified farming, money is not scarce, and the times are far from hard and depressed. In the latter, with eighty-eight townships of land, 35,000 people, only two creameries, a not numerous amount of cattle, still fewer sheep and hogs, a scantiness of dairy products and a system of farming mainly devoted to wheat culture, money is quite scarce and times are very hard and trying.

What makes the difference? They both exist under the same currency and the same flag. The difference is this: In the county of Freeborn the farmers have a large and valuable variety of farm products, bringing a fair price, to exchange for money. This makes money plentiful and times easy. On the other hand, in the county of Polk the farmers have little to exchange for money except wheat, and that was a very light crop, and the prices, owing to a glut in the foreign market, were very low. This makes money scarce and times very hard.

Farmers of the Red River Valley, if you look at the situation in its true light, is it not plain to you that relief cannot come from the referendum, from saloons kept by the state, from government ownership of railroads, from female suffrage, or from unconditional free coinage of silver at the ratio of sixteen to one?

Observe how crystal clear the language, how lucid the argument, how logical the deduction! The governor stood before the farmers of the Red river valley like a fatherly schoolmaster before his pupils, explaining in the clearest, simplest language possible difficult problems that had troubled and confused them—problems which they did not seem to be able to solve or to understand.

How many of the Populists in his audience were converted to the governor's way of thinking is a question. But if it could be done at all, it would seem that the way Knute Nelson went about it was the best possible.

We have dwelt on this speech at length, because it illustrates one of Senator Nelson's most outstanding characteristics or qualities — his fatherly way of approaching the people—especially the Scandinavians, who made up the bulk of the Red river valley farmers

of 1894—and his resort to facts and reason to accomplish his political purposes, rather than an appeal to their emotions, sympathies or prejudices. It proves him a statesman, not a political demagogue. If he was mistaken in some of his deductions or conclusions, he was, it would seem, honestly mistaken.

Largest Plurality for Governor

The campaign of 1894 lacked the dramatic interest and color of that of 1892, due in a measure to the difference in the character of Nelson's opponents. The Populists held their state convention immediately after the Republican conclave and put up as their candidate for governor, Sidney M. Owen, editor of the Farm, Stock and Home, who had made an excellent showing against Merriam in 1890. For a time the Populists fondly hoped that the Democrats would leave the entire field of opposition to them, and made determined efforts to prevent the nomination of Democratic candidates for state offices, but in September the followers of Jefferson, Jackson and Cleveland assembled in convention, nominated George L. Becker, St. Paul, for governor, and a full state ticket. Donnelly and others insisted that Becker was not a candidate in good faith—that he was put up by the forces back of Nelson to divide the strength of the opposition and thus insure his election. Becker was a tame candidate and appeared to make no serious effort to win the election. He was not at all like Lawler of the preceding campaign. Nor was Owens like Donnelly, although an able man.

The result of the election was: Nelson, 147,943 votes; Owen, 87,890; Becker, 53,584; Hans S. Hilleboe, Prohibitionist, 6,832. Nelson's plurality over Owen was 60,053, the largest in the history of the state prior to the huge Johnson landslide of 1906. He had a larger vote than the combined vote of Becker and Owen and almost a clear majority of all the votes cast.

Though the Republicans won, the force of Populism had by no means spent itself. Several of the northern

and western counties returned large majorities for Owen, and even in Douglas, he crowded Nelson rather closely. Indeed, ten townships there gave Owen a majority. The vote in the county: Nelson, 1,546; Owen, 1,205; Becker, 197; Hilleboe, ninety-five.

Apple Night at Alexandria

It was apple night at Alexandria. The returns were in. Alexandria's first citizen had been chosen governor for a second time. The victorious candidates for county offices, on the Republican ticket, showed their joy by dumping barrel after barrel of large, red-cheeked apples into Main street, and laughed heartily as the boys scrambled and fought for them. After eight barrels had been offered up by the county candidates, some "brilliant brain" (using the local editor's language) hit upon the idea to go for Governor Nelson. Kent's best bus was appropriated, with Harry in charge, a rope attached, and 200 yelling Comanches started on their mile run to Mr. Nelson's home.

Once more the woods rang with "Knute, Knute, Knute! What's the matter with Knute? He's all right, you bet!" Young America is proverbial for its awe of office and respect for dignity. Mrs. Nelson first responded and asked the boys what they wanted. "Knute, Knute!" was the reply. Governor Nelson came and then pandemonium broke loose.

"All right, boys, I'll go with you," said the good natured executive of the great North Star state and in a few minutes he was seated in the bus, whirling back to the village, where he had six barrels of apples spilled for his little, loyal friends.

Then the elders took a hand. The band was out, and while the wild racket was at its height, Honorable C. J. Gunderson was "escorted" to the bus, placed in the middle of the street, in front of the Post News office, and in a short, earnest, ringing address, introduced to the great crowd of Republicans, Democrats and Populists, Alexandria's foremost and favorite citizen. He spoke most feelingly, first to the boys, who have before visited him and known him as their friend, then to his neighbors, who all, without regard to political views, respect and honor him. He included a little good, wholesome Republican doctrine and said that, first of all, this victory was not a victory of men or parties, except as they stood for law and the preservation of order.

Then there were hearty cheers, and the greatest purely impromptu

reception and celebration in the history of Minnesota was ended. Everybody was happy, while the boys formed in line and, passing by Governor Nelson, each shook hands with him and said good night.

This gives a vivid picture of Knute Nelson in his lighter mood. Apparently, it was easy for him to meet both young and old half way and, in the language of the street, he could be a "good sport."

Nelson's Second Administration

As it turned out, Governor Nelson's second administration was of very short duration—less than a month. The twenty-ninth legislature met January 8, 1895, and the next day Mr. Nelson was sworn in as governor for the second time. His biennial message was almost twice the length of his inaugural address, or first message, of 1893, and is a very able document. It is largely a review of the industrial situation of the state since his first term as governor began, coupled with a resume of the achievements of his administration. Referring to the country warehouse law, passed in 1893, he said: "The honest warehouse man finds nothing oppressive in this law, the honest farmer has in it a reasonable safeguard and protection, and the demagogue is deprived of his favorite text of complaint."

The Hinckley forest fire came in for consideration, the steps taken by his administration in affording relief to the sufferers being pointed out in some detail. The draining of the swampy lands of the Red river valley received much attention, and he outlined a drainage plan which he believed feasible. The building of the new capitol was under way, and he spoke of the commission, which he had placed in charge of the undertaking. Again he referred with pride and satisfaction to the state university, and again showed his interest in education.

> Our university stands at the head of our educational system and occupies a leading and commanding position as an institution of high order, both at home and abroad. The most fastidious have no longer occasion to send their children to the east or abroad. All that is worth knowing and learning can be obtained at home and in our midst. Our university has made Minnesota known throughout the

civilized world. It deserves kind and liberal consideration at your hands. You should deal with it in a broad and liberal spirit. The people expect nothing less.

At one point in the message he uttered these conservative words: "Excessive and needless legislation—legislation to meet a lot of petty ills that are more easily cured within the realms of moral suasion, is one of the tendencies of our times, in respect to which we ought to practice a little self-restraint."

Among other subjects, he touched upon the Itasca state park. "The legislature of 1891 acted wisely and with rare good judgment when it established this park. Itasca lake and its preservation is sacred and dear to every American heart. The lake and all its beautiful environment should, as far as possible, be kept intact in its primitive and normal condition, and in order to accomplish this, the lands in private ownership should, as speedily as possible, be acquired by the state. . . . I commend this subject to your favorable consideration, and recommend that you appropriate sufficient funds to acquire these lands by purchase or condemnation."

In conclusion, as in his first message, he urged the importance of exercising economy in appropriations, and in the management of the state's business, as in such times of industrial stagnation and distress many enterprises were at a standstill, or in a comatose condition, and so many people were heavily burdened with debt that the taxes ought to be made as light as possible.

Chapter XIII

THE WASHBURN-NELSON SENATORIAL CAMPAIGN

We come now to the climax of Knute Nelson's career as a politician—to the last of the great campaigns in which he was a central figure. His election to the United States senate in January, 1895, was the culmination of one of the most dramatic, most thrilling engagements ever fought on a political battlefield and with the possible exception of the famous deadlock in which Alexander Ramsey fell, the greatest senatorial contest in the history of Minnesota. In the language of a current press report, it was a "battle of giants and the earth trembled under their feet."

Intense bitterness of feeling was engendered, traces of which still survive. For nothing else in his long career was Knute Nelson so sharply censured as for the part he played in this contest. For nothing else has it been so difficult to defend or excuse him.

William Drew Washburn and Cushman Kellog Davis were Minnesota's spokesmen in the upper branch of congress in January, 1895. Mr. Davis was serving his second term, having been re-elected in 1893. Mr. Washburn's term was about to expire and he fondly hoped to be his own successor. He was a very ambitious man, who had played a memorable part in the politics of the young state. Born at Livermore, Maine, January 14, 1831, he was the youngest of a family of eleven children, several of whom became distinguished citizens of the republic. Israel W. Washburn, Jr., was a member of congress and governor of Maine; Elisha B. Washburn was a member of congress, secretary of state and ambassador to France during the critical period of the Franco-Prussian war; Cadwallador C. Washburn was a member of congress, governor of Wisconsin, major general in the Civil war and eminent philanthropist; Charles A. Wash-

burn was United States minister to Paraguay and Uruguay; Samuel B. Washburn was a naval officer in the Civil war.

William D. Washburn graduated from Bowdoin college in 1854, studied law and held a clerkship in the house of representatives, where three of his brothers then sat as members from three different states—a remarkable coincidence. In 1857, he came to Minneapolis and opened a law office, but soon devoted most of his time to business and politics. He became interested in water-power development and in the organization of flour and lumber mills. He also was a railroad builder, being a member of the construction company which built the Northern Pacific line, and took a leading part in the organization of the Minneapolis and St. Louis railway. The Soo line was his idea.

In the field of politics, he had served as surveyor general of logs (on which account he received the title of "general"), as a member of the legislature in 1870, as congressman from 1879 to 1883, and as United States senator since 1889. His wealth, his prominence in business, his membership in the distinguished Washburn family, along with his political record, gave him great prestige in the state, and in spite of campaign slander, roorbacks and abuse directed against him, he was a worthy citizen in the best sense of the term. It was altogether fitting that he should be a senator of the United States.

Unfortunately for his political future, there were a number of things that militated against him as the time for the senatorial engagement drew near. One was his place of residence. There was a general feeling throughout the state that the Twin Cities should not have both of the senators—and there was St. Paul nourishing a feeling that to let a Minneapolis man continue as senator was to jeopardize the future senatorial ambitions of its own citizens. When it came to the final showdown, only one St. Paul member of the legislature stood by Washburn.

Another thing that counted against Washburn was the prevalent belief that he was an aristocrat. That would

have been very serious in a popular contest, but it was bad enough anyway. True, the legislature elected the senator, but the legislators had to keep their ears to the ground or something might happen to them at the next election. But Washburn did not alone suffer from the reputation of being aristocratic; he was also supposed to be extremely wealthy. That, too, was a serious matter. The rising tide of radicalism, as attested by the People's party movement, made it increasingly unpopular and dangerous from a political standpoint to be aristocratic and wealthy.

Still another thing worked to the detriment of Mr. Washburn—he was a very poor politician, considering the long experience he had had. Compared with Knute Nelson, he was a mere school boy at the game. Tall, handsome, dignified, he walked across the political battlefield without seeing the really dangerous moves of the enemy. And the worst of it all was, that many of the politicians who surrounded him were just about as incompetent as he to handle a campaign. They were not in the same class as the shrewd, long-headed political artists who held office under "Wily Knute," as many called him, or were aiding and abetting his campaign. They fussed around in such a manner as to make men like Charles A. Pillsbury disgusted. In a public interview, he laid the lash on them for it with right good will, and every word he said was true. Among others things, he said that "unless the fool-killer got busy Washburn's chances for election would be ruined."

A fifth factor in the situation, that tended toward Washburn's undoing, was the enemies he had made. One of the foremost of these was Dwight M. Sabin, whom he had defeated for senator six years before. Sabin had served only one term and felt that he was entitled to another. When Washburn defeated him, his friends cried out that unfair methods had been used, including the illegitimate use of money. An investigation was ordered and dropped before anything was proved, but leaving a nasty question mark, which did not help Washburn, no matter how innocent he may have been. The

precedent Washburn established of retiring a Republican senator, after only one term of service, counted against the Minneapolis statesman. Sabin and his friends used it in seeking revenge six years later.

But a far more powerful enemy than Sabin was seeking Washburn's downfall—James J. Hill. The two railroad builders had clashed. Hill did not love the Canadian Pacific, which, it was supposed, had backed Washburn in 1889 and was doing it again; and when Washburn ran the Soo line into some of the Great Northern's richest territory, the St. Paul magnate made another New Year's resolution.

Other enemies of Washburn's included big men connected with the Chicago board of trade. By his earnest fight in the senate to put through an anti-option bill, Washburn had aroused the enmity of that organization, with the result that certain Chicago newspapers, particularly the Tribune, poured one broadside after another into the tall statesman's senatorial barque. And while bombarding Washburn, the Tribune was directing attention to Knute Nelson's great ability and brilliant record. This it did as early as November, 1894, two months before Nelson took the field openly as a candidate. So conspicuous was this support that in January the Minneapolis Tribune and other Washburn champions tauntingly spoke of Nelson as "Chicago's candidate."

Anti-Washburn Conspiracy

It has been alleged that a conspiracy to defeat Senator Washburn was formed during the pre-convention campaign of 1894—that the senator's enemies controlled the committee on resolutions in the Republican state convention and prevented the insertion in the platform of any plank or resolution committing the party and the Republican candidates for the legislature to Mr. Washburn as his own successor. The resolutions reported to the convention, and adopted by it, commend the record of Mr. Washburn, along with that of Senator Davis, in general terms, but do not put him forward as the can-

didate of the party. The Republican state convention of 1892 pursued a different course with respect to Senator Davis, whose first term was about to expire.

The platform then adopted declared: "Whereas, the Republicans of Minnesota, recognizing the conspicuous ability and fidelity of Senator Cushman K. Davis, have manifested substantial unanimity in demanding his re-election to the position he has so ably filled; and

"Whereas, notable precedents are on record of the nomination by state conventions of men who are the people's choice for United States senators, thus making them the recognized candidate for that high office, therefore

"Resolved, that this convention hereby presents the name of Senator Cushman K. Davis as the chosen nominee and the candidate of the Republicans of the state of Minnesota for re-election to the United States senate by the legislature of 1893."

That was as definite and binding as it well could be and there was never any serious thought by Republicans of preventing the election of Mr. Davis by the legislature that convened the next January. Similar resolutions in behalf of Knute Nelson were adopted by the Republican state conventions of 1900, 1906 and 1912 and in each instance his election followed as a matter of course, although in 1901 there were rumors of secret plotting to encompass his defeat. It is altogether safe to assume that if a resolution of like nature in behalf of Senator Washburn had been adopted by the convention of 1894, neither Governor Nelson nor any other Republican would have entered the field against him. Hence the argument so vehemently made by many of Senator Washburn's newspaper supporters and others that there was a "moral obligation" on the part of the Republican majority of the legislature to re-elect him is without any real basis. Nor was there any obligation on the part of Mr. Comstock, Mr. McCleary or others not to enter the field against him. As Nelson expressed it, he had no "prescriptive right to the place."

Nelson's Obligations

Was there any obligation resting upon Governor Nelson not to become a candidate? That is a mooted question. The friends of Washburn declared emphatically that there was. The friends of Nelson declared just as emphatically there was not. If a King Solomon had been summoned to decide the matter, he probably would have required complete statements from both Nelson and Washburn before rendering his verdict.

Mr. Washburn made a fairly complete statement immediately after Nelson's entrance into the race: "I am surprised at Governor Nelson's candidacy, for he has led me to believe on numerous occasions that he would not be a candidate. My friends practically understood that he would not be a candidate and based their statements on assurances which he made to me both verbally and by letter. For several weeks there have been rumors to the effect that he would come out against me, but I have taken no stock in them, and only yesterday was interviewed to the effect that I believed Governor Nelson would be true to his word."

Governor Nelson refused to discuss the matter at the time or to make any formal statement, except to say that he had never, at any time, pledged his support to Senator Washburn. Years afterward—in December, 1913—in an interview with Doctor W. W. Folwell at Washington, he "flatly denied," according to the noted scholar and historian, "having made any promise that he would not be a candidate against W. D. Washburn for United States senator in the fall of 1894. In his Albert Lea speech he had spoken approvingly of Washburn.

"After election," continues Doctor Folwell's memorandum of his interview with the senator, "it became known that Washburn would have considerable opposition and that some other man might be elected. Soon after the legislature met this opposition became more pronounced. Lieutenant Governor David M. Clough came to him and asked him not to block his way by refusing to be a candidate. Others expressed their desire that he should run.

"At length he (Nelson) said he would leave it to three men to decide for him (names not to be mentioned). The three decided that he must run. Clough was, of course, ardent to have Nelson elected to the senate. He had to go back on his former friendship with Washburn. He was the man who had secured Washburn's election over Sabin. 'I saved Washburn,' Clough said. Clough declared that Washburn would never dare to call that in question. He never did."

Senator Washburn alludes to "assurances" made to him by Nelson" both verbally and by letter." No such letter was ever published, and when the writer put the question to the senator's son, W. D. Washburn, Jr., as to whether any such letter was in existence, he replied that he had burned all of his father's letters and did not wish to have the matter stirred up any further. "I have refused to make any statement as to this controversy to Doctor Folwell and will not make any to you. No good can come of any discussion of it now. It's a thing of the past."

Nelson's Albert Lea Statement

There was considerable uneasiness among the friends of Senator Washburn all during the state campaign of 1894 as to Governor Nelson's possible candidacy for senator, and efforts were made to obtain from him some statement that he would not enter the race. Governor Preus, in his address to the state historical society, puts it this way:

> The Washburn forces were using every conceivable device to get Governor Nelson to promise that he would not be a candidate for the senate. Finally, it was reported that Nelson stated in his speech at Albert Lea, "It has been reported that I am a candidate for United States senator, but this is not so. I am not a candidate and do not expect to be. I am a candidate for governor and want to be elected governor. But elect your Republican legislative ticket, so as to send my friend Washburn back to the United States senate, or, if you do not like him, send some other good Republican."
>
> That Governor Nelson made these remarks was always denied by his supporters, who were present at that meeting. Lauritz S. Swenson was at that time the president of a preparatory college at Albert Lea. He has served as United States minister to Denmark twice.

Switzerland once, and is now United States minister to Norway. He stated to me that Nelson spoke about as follows: "I am a candidate for governor, and am not a candidate for the senate. The legislature must determine who the senator shall be."

I have never been able to see why anyone should endeavor to tarnish Senator Nelson's memory by reason of this incident. To commence with, anyone in public life knows that it is a cheap political trick to commit a man on political questions that would thwart his natural and possibly deserved advancement. Furthermore, a man could not very well be so foolish as to be a candidate for two different offices under such circumstances. When the legislature met, it was clear that the people of the state favored Nelson's election. He was elected, and he resigned as governor. The best proof of his sincerity was that the legislature by overwhelming vote elected him to the senate.

Governor Preus' statement presents the matter as some of the friends of Senator Nelson see it. Mr. Preus considers Mr. Swenson as the best authority on Senator Nelson's Albert Lea declaration, which became a very important issue after the governor threw his hat into the ring and was also alluded to and commented upon at various times during the months of October, November and December, 1894.

The importance attached to this declaration is shown by the following letter, published in the Pioneer Press for January 12, 1895:

Editor of St. Paul Pioneer Press: As there appears to be some doubt in some parts of the state as to the language used by Governor Nelson in his Albert Lea speech in September last, we, the undersigned, who heard the remarks, for the purpose of setting the matter forever at rest, wish to make the following statement:

We do, therefore, state on our honor as gentlemen, that the following were the words used as near as it is possible for one person to remember what another person said. He was urging the importance to the voters of electing the whole Republican ticket and especially the legislative—as we had a United States senator to elect, and at this point he said: "It has been reported that I am a candidate for United States senator, but that is not so. I am not a candidate and do not expect to be. I am a candidate for governor, and want to be elected governor, and if elected will (or expect) to serve out my term as governor; but elect your Republican legislative ticket, so as to send my friend Senator Washburn back to the United States senate, or, if you do not like him, some other good Republican." At the point in his remarks, when he mentioned Washburn's name, he made a gesture in the direction of that gentleman, who was sitting near him.

Further, that after this speech, we know that the impression was

made on his audience that he could not consistently be a candidate for the senate. We know this from remarks made by great numbers of persons who were present.—Lyle H. Day, reporter, Standard, W. J. Schultz, superintendent of city schools, A. C. Wedge, W. E. Todd, A. J. Sylvester and G. N. Barck, Jr.

We do not know the political leanings of all of the men that signed this statement, but it is to be presumed that they were friends of Senator Washburn. Mr. Day was a reporter on a Democratic paper and, presumably, was a Democrat. Mr. Wedge was a rather prominent Republican. It is an interesting circumstance that Mr. Schultz signed his name to this statement, in view of the fact that another educator of Albert Lea, Professor L. S. Swenson, had already given out his version of the Nelson declaration.

Another man of much prominence was drawn into this controversy—the late T. V. Knatvold, who was chairman of the Albert Lea meeting and introduced Governor Nelson to the audience. He was state senator-elect, and later ran for congress against James A. Tawney. Mr. Knatvold was a strong supporter of Governor Nelson and was rather bitter toward Washburn, claiming that the senator's friends had tried to accomplish his defeat in the election after he had refused to pledge his vote for Washburn.

Here is Senator Knatvold's version, as published in the Pioneer Press for January 6, 1895:

"Governor Nelson's exact words were: 'Elect your entire legislative ticket. We want a Republican legislature, so we can send Senator Washburn or some other good Republican to the United States senate. My name has been mentioned. I am not a candidate. I am a candidate for governor, and if elected expect to serve out my term."

Minus the frills, this agrees almost exactly with the version signed by the six gentlemen already named. With all due respect to Mr. Swenson, it would seem that a King Solomon or an American jury would hold that the Day-Schultz-Wedge-Todd-Sylvester-Barck version is a more accurate statement of Governor Nelson's remarks than his own.

The very circumstances of the case bear out this conclusion. Why should Governor Nelson make any declaration at all were it not because he wished to put an end to the rumors that attributed to him senatorial aspirations?

If the six Albert Lea citizens had not sincerely tried to make an accurate statement of Nelson's words, they would have made out a stronger case against him. They would have left no loop holes. They would have made the governor's declaration more definite—leaving out the "expect."

Nelson had come to a fork in the road. If he maintained silence, a controversy might break loose between his own and the friends of Washburn—a controversy which might have resulted in the disruption of the Republican party and its defeat, as well as his own in the approaching election. By saying what he did, he played safe, not only for himself, but for the Republican party as well.

Now, if Governor Nelson was correctly quoted—or substantially so—at Albert Lea, did he do wrong in taking the field against Washburn? How a King Solomon would answer this question is not so easily determined. Senator Washburn and his warm friends thought he did wrong. The senator himself counted on a clear field so far as Nelson was concerned. He refused to give credence to the talk that Nelson would be a candidate—talk that buzzed louder and louder as the legislative session drew near.

"Father got angry every time we mentioned it to him," said W. D. Washburn, Jr. If Senator Washburn had not been sincere in this belief, he would not have been so upset by the news of Nelson's candidacy. He would not have hurried to St. Paul to see Nelson in person. He felt disappointed—felt that he had been grievously wronged.

But in the opinion of Nelson's friends and, apparently, in the opinion of a majority of the people of the state and of a large portion of the Republican members of the legislature, he did no wrong in entering the race.

They had a different point of view. It was a question over which there seemed to be honest disagreement. If there had not been this honest difference of opinion, Nelson would not have been elected—he would have gone down before the terrible onslaught that the Washburn forces and the Washburn press directed against him.

Soon after the Albert Lea speech the Anoka Union, a Republican paper, said: "Knute Nelson, in his own good time and his own sensible way, announced down at Albert Lea that he was not a candidate for United States senator and would serve out his term if elected governor in November."

To which Ignatius Donnelly's Representative replied: "Oh, no, Brother Pease! Governor Nelson said he expected to serve out his term as governor if elected—which he won't be. He has never yet said he would serve the term out."

This shows that even before the election some people, at least, did not feel that Nelson had deliberately shut the door against the senatorship.

Commenting on the language attributed to Governor Nelson by the six citizens of Albert Lea, the St. Paul Pioneer Press said editorially, January 12:

> No one pretends that his (Nelson's) conduct during the election did not conform exactly to what he said at Albert Lea. It is admitted that he did not attempt to interfere in the slightest degree with Mr. Washburn's efforts to secure a legislature favorable to him; that he never spoke of him except kindly; that he did not place the slightest obstacle in his way. He surrendered the entire field of the senatorial candidacy before the people to Washburn. Washburn tried and failed to secure a majority of members favorable to his election. The people had thus invited all candidates who chose to enter the field. What nonsense to say that after this Nelson alone was precluded from entering the field, because up to this point he had surrendered everything to Washburn.

The Pioneer Press rendered the Nelson forces a great service during the campaign. Its editor was Joseph Wheelock, generally recognized as the greatest editor Minnesota has had, ranking well up among the really great moulders of public opinion that America has produced. The Pioneer Press was then at the height of its

influence and prestige. Very shrewdly and wisely, Editor Wheelock did not attack Washburn. On the contrary, he treated him with profound respect. Whatever criticism he made was directed against Washburn's managers, who, it was freely admitted, blundered greatly. The attitude assumed at the outset of the contest by the Pioneer Press, was that of a friendly, disinterested neutrality. This made its dignified, forceful pronunciamentoes in behalf of Nelson all the more effective.

> What is it they charge him with? [asked the Pioneer Press in speaking of the governor]. That in a speech at Albert Lea, when Washburn was present, he had said that he was not a candidate for the senate, and proposed, if elected governor, to serve out his term. Well, what if he did? He said what he thought and expected at the time. It was not a pledge that under no possible circumstances would he become a candidate. A pledge to whom? Who had the right to exact a pledge of any kind? He might well have believed and said at that time, when it was the general expectation that a legislature would be chosen favorable to Washburn, that he was not a candidate and did not expect to become a candidate.

Was Nelson a Secret Candidate?

The shrewdest of the politicians back of Senator Washburn was "Uncle" Loren Fletcher, for many years a congressman from Minneapolis. He was among those who charged that the governor had been a secret candidate for several months. "I had expected that he would defer his announcement," said Fletcher, "until after a speaker had been elected, but it is better it could come now. I always prefer to conduct warfare in the open rather than in the brush. . . . It has been the policy of the opposition all along to bring out all the candidates they could get and break matters up as much as possible. They have made the same proposition to fifty men that they have made to these that they have led into the race."

In the last sentence, Mr. Fletcher referred to the candidacy of Solon G. Comstock and James T. McCleary, who, it was charged by the Washburn forces, were induced to enter the contest by Nelson's friends in order to prevent Washburn from obtaining a majority of the legislators and create a deadlock until the hour for projecting Nelson into the field arrived.

What basis was there for this talk that Nelson had been a "secret candidate for months"? Nothing but misgivings and rumors. It is a common thing in politics for "wise birds" to shake their heads significantly and intimate they know ever so much, but when put on the rack and made to display the extent of their knowledge, they know nothing whatever that has any value as real evidence, or proof.

The Standard of Albert Lea, a Democratic organ, with Populistic leanings, prided itself, when Nelson announced his candidacy, that it had repeatedly warned the friends of Washburn before the election that Nelson would enter the lists, and among the Donnelly letters in the archives of the Minnesota Historical society is found a letter from H. G. Day, the Standard's editor, written early in 1894, in which he informs Donnelly that a deal had been made whereby Nelson was to become senator and Clough governor. But the letter quotes no authority for this interesting information. Donnelly helped to pass the "news" along. In the Representative for October 17, 1894, he said: "If the Republicans carry the legislature and the state, Governor Nelson will be the next senator and Dave Clough will be governor. All indications point to this result. Washburn cannot be re-elected, and when this fact is established, Governor Nelson will be the candidate of the party. Outside of Hennepin county he has four times as many friends running for the legislature as has Mr. Washburn. It is a noticeable fact that only about four counties have instructed for Washburn. That shows his weakness."

After Nelson entered the lists, the Globe of St. Paul professed to have known all along that Nelson was going to be a candidate, but discreetly failed to furnish any evidence on which to base its knowledge. It had been doing its level best to stir up trouble among the Republicans and had slurred and lambasted Washburn, generously telling ambitious Republicans that now was the time to reach out for the senatorial toga—that Washburn was too weak to hold it any longer.

There is little doubt that a plan had been formed long

in advance of the legislative session, and well in advance of the Republican state convention, to defeat Senator Washburn, and it is altogether likely that the men back of this plan believed that Governor Nelson was the man, above all others, best qualified to wrest the toga from the Minneapolis statesman. But no one has yet come forward with any evidence worth considering that Nelson had anything to do with the hatching of this plan, that he had any knowledge that he was to be used as an instrument with which to defeat Mr. Washburn, or, if he had such knowledge, that he intended or expected to be a candidate.

Solon G. Comstock, Moorhead, former congressman, entered the field as a candidate against Washburn two days before Christmas, and not long afterward Congressman James T. McCleary, Mankato, also announced his candidacy. Both of these candidacies were bitterly resented by the friends of Senator Washburn—especially that of McCleary, and, according to the Pioneer Press, earnest efforts were made to bring about his withdrawal. Washburn was strong in the Mankato territory, and it was feared that McCleary's entry would cut into his vote.

It was also stated by the Pioneer Press and other papers that Congressman James A. Tawney was being urged to enter the race and might announce his candidacy at any moment. John Lind, New Ulm, who had unusual popularity in his old congressional district and was an idol among the Swedes of the entire state, being the first of their nationality to sit in congress, was also being prominently "mentioned," but he firmly refused to enter the race and declared himself for Washburn.

Tribune's Attack on Nelson

The legislature was to convene January 8, but several days in advance of the opening, representatives and senators began dropping into the capital to get ready for the session and learn what was on foot. The rumors increased from day to day. Was Governor Nelson, the man of mystery, whom everybody was watching, getting ready for a coup? What was he doing up at Alexandria?

Then something happened. On January 2, the Minneapolis Tribune published an editorial which is one of the most important documents in the Knute Nelson chronicle. It is, therefore, reprinted in full:

NELSON BEHIND COMSTOCK.

'Tis not the many oaths that make the truth,
But the plain single vow that is vowed true.
—*Shakespeare.*

Governor Knute Nelson has been spending the holidays at his home in Alexandria, and it is not a little significant that concurrently with his visit his home paper, The Alexandria Post News, comes out with a warm eulogy and indorsement of S. G. Comstock's candidacy for the United States senate. Comstock is known to be a long-headed man and a good politician, and it is not likely that he would have precipitated himself into the senatorial fight without assurance of good backing; and we have it from a straight source that this assurance was furnished him by Governor Nelson. Comstock has said within the past week that Governor Nelson promised to array all the influences at his command in his (Comstock's) favor.

The Tribune leaves honorable men to characterize this conduct of Governor Nelson as it deserves. Every man familiar with the late campaign in this state knows that Nelson would have been defeated, in spite of the Republican tidal wave, had not Senator Washburn and his friends worked for him with a will. Had it been understood that he was hostile to Senator Washburn's re-election, Hennepin County would have given a plurality of 20,000 against him and his vote in other counties would have fallen off in a manner that would have made him exceedingly weary. But Nelson had given Washburn personal assurance that he was friendly, and at Albert Lea he proclaimed, in a public speech, that he would serve out his term as governor, if elected, conveying the impression that he was friendly to Mr. Washburn, who sat on the platform with him. Washburn's friends took this as assurance of Nelson's loyalty, and from that moment those who had been suspicious and mistrustful, gave the governor their undivided and energetic support, staying the tide which had set in against him, and which threatened his defeat.

Now, how does Governor Nelson repay this service and redeem his pledge virtually given? By fetching a puppet into the field against Washburn and promising to aid the puppet by every means in his power. Whether Nelson intends at the proper moment to pull Comstock in and himself come forward as a candidate, or stand by Comstock to the end, makes no difference in the character of the act. It is a piece of arrant treachery and bad faith, and will be so viewed by all men who are at all particular about keeping their pledges.

This from the Tribune, the staunch old Republican champion which had always been Knute Nelson's loyal

friend, which had stood with him in the Kindred fight from the beginning of the primary campaign to the counting of the last ballot in November, which had praised his work in congress, which had urged his nomination as governor in 1890, in 1892, and in 1894, which had defended him valiantly against the Populist and Democratic attacks all during the nineties, and which had lauded his administration as chief executive. "It was the most unkindest cut of all."

If it had been the vitriolic Globe or the pestiferous Times of Minneapolis, which had constantly plagued him with their flings and their inuendoes, the Viking might have ignored the onslaught—or let it pass with an extra chew of tobacco—but now he was "mad clean through."

That night there was a council of war in St. Paul, according to the newspaper reporters and they watched the executive offices and the governor's suite at the Merchants hotel very closely. The next morning word was passed that the governor was in the field as a candidate for senator.

Look back at Doctor Folwell's memorandum of his Nelson interview in 1913. Note what is said about Nelson leaving it to three men to decide whether he should be a candidate. It must have been on the night of January 2, after the Tribune's attack and while the Viking's wrath was at white heat, that those three men gave their decision.

The Pioneer Press for January 4, 1895: "'I am a candidate and shall do all I can to be elected.'

"This was the statement of Governor Nelson in reply to the question, 'Are you a candidate for the United States senate?' The governor, after replying to the question, turned to the Tribune reporter, who was present, and said: 'The editorial in yesterday's Tribune made me a candidate.'

"The news was a bomb in the Washburn camp. To be sure, it had been expected, yet all along the senator's friends had hoped the expected would not transpire. Nelson is the only man they feared, for they did not think anyone else in the state could mass the opposition.

Of course, they have claimed there is no opposition, but Goveror Nelson is too astute a politician to go astray and chase butterflies."

The Washburn-Nelson Interview

"The news was a bomb in the Washburn camp." The senator, himself, took an interurban car from Minneapolis—there were no busses, taxicabs or limousines in those days—and alighted in front of the executive offices. He was going to see Knute Nelson. It was a manly thing to do, worthy of a manly man. State Senator Yale, Winona, former lieutenant governor, was having a talk with the governor just as Washburn came—about Nelson's candidacy.

"While we were chatting," said Yale afterward, "a card came and after reading the name, Nelson said: 'Here is Washburn now, waiting to see me.'

" 'That being the case,' I said, 'I will retire,' and as I walked to the door going out, Washburn met me coming in. I stopped long enough to say: 'Now that you are together, boys, fight it out and may the best man win.' "

The interview between Washburn and Nelson was interesting. The St. Paul Dispatch and the Times of Minneapolis printed the same story of it. It was evidently based on what Washburn told the reporters afterward, and while it may be slightly colored, is undoubtedly correct, if not in form, certainly in substance. After an exchange of formal greetings, the senator said smilingly:

"Well, governor, I am expecting that you will come out and give my cause a big boost."

Scratching his head for a moment and looking down at the carpet, the governor replied: "Well, I don't know about that. Last night I made up my mind to be a candidate myself."

Senator Washburn expressed his surprise and referred to the Albert Lea speech and numerous letters from Nelson saying he was not a candidate and to the impression which Nelson had allowed to go over the state before election that he was a candidate for governor and governor only.

"I never said that I would support you," said Nelson.

"Very true," replied Washburn, "but you said you would not be

a candidate against me and in a letter told me that you would lay no obstacle in my path."

Nelson admitted he had made that statement in a letter and then began to talk about the way in which the newspapers had been abusing him.

"But I am not responsible for the newspapers," said Washburn. "In fact, they have not been under my control at all. Much that they have said I also cannot endorse."

"But you don't imagine, do you," broke in the governor, "that you have a prescriptive right to the place?"

"Of course not, but I do say that so far as you are concerned I have a prescriptive right. Your statements in public and in private have justified me in saying everywhere that you were not a candidate, and I have said this all over the state. So have my friends."

Nelson then began to talk of what he had done for the party in Minnesota in 1892 and 1894 and that he was entitled to some reward for what he had done.

"In 1892 and 1894," said Washburn, "there was good work done for the Republican party in this state. You did your share of the work and I did my share. Others, too, did what they could. I think I am safe in asserting that the sinews of war in both campaigns came from my friends in Minneapolis. They furnished the best speakers, not including yourself, and were on duty in all stages of the campaign, fighting your battles and the battles of the party."

Speaking to a Dispatch reporter, Senator Washburn said: "The governor offered no excuse for his candidacy beyond the abuse of the newspapers and the fact that his work for the party deserved recognition."

One of the reporters said, in describing the parting between the senator and the governor: "Governor Nelson accompanied the senator to the door, where they parted never to meet again as friends."

That was not exactly true. The feeling between the two was never again warm or really cordial, but was by no means antagonistic after 1900. In that year, friends of Senator Washburn proposed him as a candidate for vice president before the Republican national convention. To that convention Senator Nelson was one of the delegates-at-large and gave the Washburn proposal his cordial endorsement. This was very gratifying to Washburn's friends, especially in view of the fact that some others in the Minnesota delegation, notably Senator C. K. Davis, took a lukewarm, if not unfriendly attitude. Washburn's name was not presented to the convention, which demanded Roosevelt, so Nelson had no opportu-

nity to fight for his former rival. Before Washburn died in 1912, he and Nelson had exchanged letters and had shown something of the same mutual respect and consideration that existed before 1895.

Nelson's Aggressive Fight

Tams Bixby, the governor's private secretary and one of the shrewdest political manipulators Minnesota has seen, was nominally in charge of the Nelson campaign for senator, but the Viking himself was the real field marshal, and never did he work harder than during the three weeks that followed the announcement of his candidacy.

"I wish to say that for three weeks we didn't sleep very much," he said in a speech at Alexandria, February 14, 1895, in telling about the great struggle. "We" (that is, he and his lieutenants) "went to bed about 2 o'clock in the morning and were up very early, averaging about four hours of sleep a night."

Campaign headquarters were opened in both the Merchants and the old Windsor hotels. Nothing was left undone that might mean votes for Nelson. Innumerable letters were written to all parts of the state, urging friends to bring pressure to bear upon members of the legislature to line up for Nelson. Petitions directed to representatives and senators, requesting them to vote for the governor, were circulated in many rural precincts and signed by a large majority of the people. Mass meetings were held in many of the country cities and villages, some of them spontaneously, but others instigated by the shrewd managers at St. Paul.

The manner in which news was given to the press was extremely artistic. The Pioneer Press, with its large circulation, was the organ through which the Nelson forces gave out their publicity to shape public opinion, to inspire the workers for the cause in the factories, on the farms, in the stores and other gathering places in the towns, cities and villages. Good governor as he was, it is to be feared that for three weeks Knute Nelson neglected his executive duties, even though he was up and

doing all but about four hours every day. But, then, what governor has not done the same?

The interviews that Nelson gave out from day to day are very interesting and suggestive. They were extremely short and to the point. Here are just a few samples:

January 9. "We are saying nothing, but sawing wood. In a contest like this, we must all keep at work and keep our plans to ourselves. You can say, though, that we have every reason to believe that we will win and that our strength is growing all the time."

January 10. "No, I don't think it is wise to say anything about our strength. Silence, you know, is golden, and in war it is always best to protect yourself as much as possible from the enemy. That is what we are trying to do and we are going to win the fight."

January 12. "I don't think I have any voice in the matter of holding a Republican caucus. I am going to continue to do as I did when a boy while engaged in a fight—keep my mouth shut and pound."

Clough's Part in the Fray

Lieutenant Governor Clough was a mighty factor in the great struggle. He had been through a good many fights, "Dave" had, as lumberjack, lumber king, state senator and politician. He knew how to "line up the boys" both in the bar room and in a political convention or legislative body. As the Folwell memorandum says, he is the man who saved Washburn in the senatorial fight of 1889. His methods were questioned then—by the Sabin crowd—while the Washburn faction accepted the benefits without raising any fine points of law as to the way he went about it. In the fight of 1895, it was a horse of another color. Then he was out to defeat Washburn, not save him, and certain parties didn't just exactly like it and said some things about his methods which would not have looked very well in print. One of his methods, they said, was to "buy" votes for Nelson with jobs for relatives and friends—clerkships, doorkeeper jobs, janitor jobs and what not, in the state senate, and bigger jobs to be handed out when he became governor.

What a cry there was in Minneapolis over the idea of making the rough and bluff Clough governor of Min-

nesota by sending Knute Nelson to the senate! The papers were full of protests. That alone, they said, was ample reason, if none other existed, why Nelson should be defeated. The legislature owed it to the state to keep Clough out of the governorship by re-electing Washburn. It would be an imposition upon the people to foist upon them for governor a man they would under no circumstances elect to that position of their own accord. They meant every word of this, too. Yet the people elected Clough governor the next year!

The Washburn Campaign

The legislature convened January 8, five days after Nelson took the field as a candidate for senator. As the members came in, they were waylaid by both factions. Each side had "spotters" at the trains and each tried desperately to be the first to get at the members and to steer them safely into the right headquarters. Talking about headquarters, Washburn was just as well supplied as Nelson. He had big ones at the Merchants and at the Windsor—but not at the capitol. R. B. Langdon, Loren Fletcher, R. G. Evans and Senator J. T. Wyman were the most conspicuous field marshals and were generally in charge at the headquarters. Mr. Washburn, himself, put in his appearance daily. Former Governor John S. Pillsbury and C. A. Pillsbury were not so active as some of the others, but lent a hand now and then.

Comstock and McCleary also had headquarters and were active, but very little difference it made. Everybody knew that neither Comstock nor the "schoolmaster" cut any figure—everybody but themselves.

Washburn was Minneapolis' most prominent citizen and, although he had a number of enemies and ill-wishers in the city, its people as a whole stood by him loyally. The biggest men in Minneapolis took a hand in the fight to put him over. A mass meeting was held at the West hotel to lay plans for the campaign, and Mayor William Henry Eustis appointed a committee of twenty-one leading citizens to co-operate with the Washburn

forces in the legislature, the leader of which was Senator Wyman, prominent in politics and distinguished in the business world. In a certain sense, the Washburn candidacy was made a Minneapolis affair. That was probably a tactical error, tending to arouse prejudice against the senator in St. Paul and also emphasizing, in the eyes of the rural communities, the fact that he was a city candidate.

One phase of the Washburn campaign was to impress upon the legislature that the senator was a big man at Washington. The Minneapolis papers printed dispatches from the national capital to the effect that the senators were earnestly hoping for Washburn's return and quoted interviews with senate leaders in praise of his record. John Lind's part in the campaign for the Minneapolis candidate was given considerable prominence. He was quoted as saying that Minnesota had never had a representative at Washington, either in the house or the senate, "whose ability to accomplish results and whose success in looking after the interests of the state was any greater than that of Senator Washburn. I think he will be his own successor, and I believe he ought to be."

This, coming from a former member of congress who was himself strongly urged as a candidate for senator, was hailed with joy by Mr. Washburn's adherents, and their hearts went out to John Lind, in spite of his free silver "heresies." Indeed, so highly did they esteem him that, after it became apparent that Senator Washburn could not be elected, and the only hope of defeating Nelson lay in combining on a new candidate, they turned to the New Ulm leader as the man to save the state from Clough as governor and the nation from Nelson as senator. And John Lind took their plea under advisement, but decided not to be a candidate.

The Washburn forces did not neglect the country. They, too, circulated petitions asking members of the legislature to support their candidate, and some mass meetings were held to demonstrate Washburn's strength in rural communities. But it seemed harder to get sign-

ers to the Washburn than to the Nelson petitions—also harder to get up big meetings—and impartial observers unite in saying that in most of the state, outside of Minneapolis, there was a stronger sentiment for the governor than for the senator.

It has been stated that "every Republican paper in the state" denounced Nelson for his candidacy, and that all of the Twin City dailies did the same. This is by no means true. The Pioneer Press, as we have seen, while professing a friendly neutrality, was in reality on the Nelson side, publishing powerful editorials in his behalf and playing up his strength in the country in its news columns. Also many of the country weeklies praised Nelson and upheld his candidacy.

Exciting Republican Caucus

In the days when the United States senators were elected by the legislature, it was always customary for the members of each political party to hold a caucus for the purpose of agreeing upon a candidate. Whoever got a majority in the caucus became the nominee of his party, and each member of the caucus was supposed to be in duty bound to vote for him when the time came for the election of a senator, as provided by the constitution. Each house first voted separately. If a candidate had a clear majority in each branch, he was declared elected. If not, the two houses met in joint assembly and kept on voting until some candidate got a majority.

In the beginning of the Washburn-Nelson fight there was some doubt as to whether the Republican members of the legislature would hold a caucus. Some of the Washburn men claimed that the Nelson forces preferred to decide the election in the legislature proper, on the theory that some of the Democrats and Populists would vote for him in order to defeat Washburn. The Nelson forces, on the other hand, professed to be indifferent in the matter. A caucus was finally arranged for the night of January 18. It was held in the house chamber at the state capitol. With the approval of all candidates, John

L. Gibbs, Freeborn county, was elected chairman—a very able man for the job.

Owing to lack of room in the house chamber, it was out of the question to throw the doors open to the public, which created intense disappointment, for everybody loves a good fight, and everybody knew that one was about to take place. The Minnesota Editorial association was holding its annual convention in St. Paul, and it was decided to admit its members to the gallery, representatives of the city dailies being allowed on the floor. When the gallery doors were opened to admit the country editors, the crowd saw its opportunity and rushed in regardless of the efforts of the sergeants and doorkeepers to stop them. A general "rough house" resulted. Finally Captain S. G. Van Sant, speaker of the house, appeared upon the scene and ordered everybody out of the chamber except the Republican members of the legislature, the officers of the house and senate, the editors and the press representatives. He spoke like one having authority and after he had threatened to enforce his orders with the help of volunteers, the forbidden guests beat a retreat. The noisy interruption delayed proceedings for about half an hour and was probably responsible for the failure of the caucus to make a nomination. At least so it was surmised by some of the reporters.

Roll call showed 141 present out of a total of 142. This led to a wrangle as to whether a majority of those present or of the entire Republican membership of the legislature should constitute a choice. It was finally decided that the successful man must have seventy-two votes. Senator J. T. Wyman, Minneapolis, presented the name of Senator Washburn; Senator E. T. Young, Appleton, leader of the Nelson forces, nominated the governor; Senator W. B. Douglas, Moorhead, performed a like service for Mr. Comstock, and Representative William O. Lockwood of the Seventh district placed Mr. McCleary in nomination.

All of the nominating speeches were able. Mr. Young, who later became prominent in Minnesota politics as attorney general and held a commanding position as a

member of the bar, brought joy to the hearts of Nelson's friends with his thrilling words.

> With the courage and audacity of genius [he shouted after an appropriate preamble] he has always been found giving battle to the enemies of our liberties and the foes of our Constitution, whether the weapon of attack was the bullet of the rebel or the shaft of political heresy.
>
> Two years ago, when our party was beset by adversity on every hand, when darkness was on the face of the political deep and defeat and ruin seemed imminent, there went up a cry of distress from the great heart of the Republican party and a demand for this man to lead the hosts of righteousness into the regions of right and security. He answered that call and in the memorable contest he marched up and down this great state, and throughout every valley and plain and hamlet he proclaimed the doctrines of the party with the eloquence born of conviction and the untiring vigor of enthusiasm.

The speech of Representative J. M. Underwood, Minneapolis, seconding the nomination of Nelson, was also vigorous and stirring. Although from Washburn's home city, he stood by Corporal Nelson, his old Civil war comrade.

"I rise," said he, "to second the nomination of a man who, while some of the men who have been nominated were enjoying the luxuries of their homes, took his gun and went to the front to fight for his country. I second the nomination of Comrade Knute Nelson, and when I speak the word comrade it is a word which thrills me through and through."

Knute Nelson's war record—what an asset in his campaigns! It was a rallying cry to his forces when leading an attack, a shield and an armor when the enemy crowded in to smash him. All things considered, next to his undoubted ability and picturesque personality, it was his greatest element of strength as a politician. And the fact that Senator Washburn had not fought as a soldier in the Civil war was an element of weakness in his clash with Nelson. It was used against him all over the state. Mr. Underwood's allusion to men "enjoying the luxuries of their homes" was meant for him. Nor did Nelson's failure to become a high officer weaken him in the least. On the contrary, it made him all the dearer to the commoners that he had been a common soldier. They

knew that for that reason he had suffered all the more, had been exposed to greater dangers. It is not improbable that if Senator Washburn had served and suffered in the army, as Nelson did, he would have won the memorable political battle of January, 1895.

The Hand Writing on the Wall

Six ballots were taken in the caucus. Here is the record:

	1st	2nd	3rd	4th	5th	6th
Washburn	61	59	60	60	57	55
Nelson	45	55	57	58	58	60
Comstock	14	10	9	10	14	14
McCleary	11	11	10	11	9	8
Scattering	7	6	5	2	3	3

It is worthy of note that Washburn polled his entire strength on the first ballot. That was a serious blunder, a fact to which the Tribune called attention a week later when the contest had been settled. He had nothing in reserve—no recruits to bring up on succeeding ballots to impress the band-wagon boys. Nelson, on the other hand, gained on every ballot except the fifth, and those who claim to know what they are talking about said that he was still holding some votes in reserve when the caucus adjourned. But that may not be true.

It was apparent that Washburn's candidacy had spent its force, while Nelson's was gathering momentum. As one of the papers put it the next day, Washburn was defeated and either Nelson or a dark horse would be chosen by the legislature. As the caucus adjourned without making a nomination, the contest was thrown into the two houses, where the vote was to be taken January 22.

Henry Feig, representative from the Willmar district, was chiefly responsible for the adjournment of the caucus before a choice was made. He was an enemy of Nelson's and had been voting for Lind, Comstock and McCleary. He realized that if the caucus remained in session indefinitely, Nelson would be nominated, while if an adjournment could be had, a deal might be consum-

mated to defeat him. So, as soon as the result of the fourth ballot had been announced, he moved to adjourn. His motion was received with cries of "No! No!" and was voted down. After the sixth ballot Feig renewed his motion and again there were loud cries of "No! No!" The viva voce vote was close, and a rising vote was agreed upon. Feig shouted to the friends of Comstock and McCleary to stand up and support the motion, the Washburn men having already risen. Representative J. F. Jacobson, Lac qui Parle, a strong Nelson man, roared at Feig, "Are you running both Comstock's and McCleary's campaigns?"

In the excitement which ensued, the vote was announced as seventy-one to sixty-one in favor of adjournment, and Chairman Gibbs announced, "the caucus stands adjourned."

There was talk of another caucus, but neither side appeared anxious to take the initiative in calling one, so the election went to the house and the senate. The caucus adjourned Friday night. At noon the next Tuesday came the election. Busy were the days that followed. Some of the wavering legislators went home over Sunday to talk it over with their friends and neighbors—also to get away from both factions and have a breathing spell.

There were no nominating or seconding speeches in either branch of the legislature Tuesday noon. The vote in the senate stood: Washburn, twenty-three; Nelson, seventeen; Comstock, three; Donnelly, five, and scattering, six. The vote in the house: Washburn, thirty-two; Nelson, forty-five; Comstock, eleven; McHale, nine; Donnelly, seven; McCleary, seven, and scattering, two.

This shows a slight gain for Nelson and a big loss for Washburn. But no candidate received a majority, so, on the next day, the two houses met in joint session. The Washburn forces realized that there was no possibility of the senator's election, and the only question to consider was whether he should withdraw in favor of another man or go down with the flag flying. A secret

meeting of the leaders was held immediately at the Windsor headquarters. Almost thirty were present. Senator Washburn made a short speech, thanking his friends for the loyalty they had shown and the good fight they had made. As to whether he ought to withdraw in favor of another candidate who might be able to mass the opposition to Nelson and thus defeat him, or whether he should stay in the race until the end, he would leave to his followers.

It was finally agreed to adjourn the conference until 8 o'clock in the evening, and in the meantime the steps to be taken would be considered by a committee, composed of Senators Wyman and Howard and Representative A. B. Robbins.

"During the interim," said the Tribune, "a committee was sent to consult with Comstock and McCleary to make an offensive and defensive alliance against Nelson."

Nothing came of this move. At the evening conference it was learned that John Lind, to whom overtures had been made, had definitely declined to be a candidate "at this hour," as the Tribune writer said. "He is still for Washburn."

102 Votes for Nelson

It was therefore decided to go down to defeat with Washburn and when the joint session met Wednesday noon, January 23, 1895, it was generally believed that Nelson would be named. And he was named on the first ballot. Frank A. Day, state senator from the Fairmont district, later lieutenant governor, private secretary to Governor Johnson and Democratic leader, started the landslide to the governor. When his name was called on the roll, rising to his feet to explain his vote, he declared:

"I believe that Senator Washburn is honestly entitled to a re-election, but I believe that his case is hopeless, and to prolong the strife will only be to sacrifice the interests of the state, with no benefit to society or politics. There is not a man who does not recognize the inevitable

result and we might as well face it now. I therefore cast my vote for Knute Nelson."

The vote: Nelson, 102; Washburn, thirty-six; McCleary, nine; Donnelly, thirteen; Mitchell, four, and Lind, one.

As Nelson's vote was more than a majority of the total membership of the legislature, he was declared elected. A committee was appointed to notify him of the result and escort him to the chamber to deliver his speech of acceptance. The governor appeared within a few minutes and spoke very briefly. It was evident that he had made no preparation and that he was laboring under strong feeling. If correctly reported by the press, his speech was one of the poorest he ever made, being somewhat halting in style and without much force or cohesion. His allusions to his defeated rival, Senator Washburn, almost leads to the conclusion that he felt sorry for what he had done—that he did not rejoice in his own victory.

After the legislature had rendered its momentous decision, the Globe, which had been ridiculing and attacking both Nelson and Washburn, but had been peculiarly bitter toward the governor, contained these words in its report of the outcome.

"Nelson owes his election to three causes—to Washburn's unpopularity, to his own strength with the common people, and to the perfect organization of his forces. His campaign for the senatorship was a succession of masterly strokes of policy, following each other in such rapid succession as to absolutely dumbfound his opponent."

And editorially the same paper declared: "To the friends of Nelson it is but another expression of the now fully accepted belief that Nelson cannot be defeated for anything to which he aspires in Minnesota. . . . One fact was made thoroughly manifest and that was that as a choice between Washburn and Nelson, the common people favored Nelson by an overwhelming majority. If it had not been so, it would have been practically impossible to elect him under the circumstances."

Chapter XIV

PICTURES AND EPISODES

The tumult and the shouting dies,
The captains and the kings depart.

Quiet again reigned at the capitol and in the hotel lobbies after the tremendous Nelson-Washburn struggle. The politicians who had flocked to St. Paul from all parts of the state to help line up the legislature for the tall, stately New Englander or the short, stocky Norseman, went back to their home precincts. The intensity of the fight is shown by this massing of the "captains and the kings" of politics. Some came of their own accord because they were eager to help their favorite win. Others were summoned by the candidates or their lieutenants. It may be taken for granted that they did not have to pay their own expenses while in the city. Each side had a good sized war chest. Washburn was wealthy and had rich backers, and behind Nelson stood men whose purses were not exactly lean. If it is true that Hill and the Chicago Board of Trade backed him, they may have assisted just a little, and the appointive office holders did not have to be asked twice for contributions. There was no corrupt practices act then and far less pretense and hypocrisy in such matters than there is today.

One of the men sent for by Washburn was E. E. Corliss, Fergus Falls, an old-time friend and supporter of Nelson.

During the general campaign, [says Elmer E. Adams], Corliss went to Nelson and asked him if he was going to be a candidate for the United States senate, and Nelson said that he was not. Washburn later asked Corliss to help him and, assuming that Nelson would not be a candidate, Corliss pledged his support to Washburn. . . . . I saw Corliss as he boarded the train for St. Paul and he told me he hated to go down and work against Nelson, but he had pledged his support to Washburn, and a man had to be either a man or a mouse, and no one had ever accused him of being a mouse. He ran across Nelson in the Windsor hotel, and went to shake hands with

him, as usual, but Nelson refused to shake hands, and for many years their relations were entirely severed, although later they were resumed in a limited degree.

This episode is important for two reasons: It shows how intense were Nelson's feelings during the struggle and is further evidence that he had not planned to be a candidate for senator.

The Nationality Issue

The nationality question figured in the senatorial campaign as in the congressional fight of 1882 and Nelson's two campaigns for governor. The Washburn forces charged openly that the governor was appealing to Scandinavian members of the legislature to support him because of his nationality and that he flew into a rage when Senator E. K. Roverud, of the first district, said he would vote for Washburn because his constituents favored the senator. The Minneapolis Times published a sensational account of the scene, maintaining that although Roverud was a giant, standing over six feet, the "Little Norwegian" threatened him with violence. This story was denounced as a falsehood by Senator Roverud in a Pioneer Press interview, and Gustav Theden, Minneapolis, a colleague, says that he talked with Roverud about the matter at the time and was told that it was a fabrication. Roverud voted for Governor Nelson both in the caucus and on the floor of the senate.

The Globe was particularly offensive in its handling of the nationality question, and it has been stated—though without verification—that this made a number of Norwegians in the legislature so disgusted that, although they had intended to vote for Washburn, they swung into line for Nelson. Indeed, it has been hinted that some of the sly backers of the governor were instrumental in getting some of the most offensive articles into the papers in the hope of producing just such results.

A check of the members of the legislature shows that ten Scandinavians voted for Washburn in the test vote on January 22, while twenty voted for Nelson. A considerable portion of the Scandinavian members were

Populists and voted for Donnelly, the duly nominated party candidate. If the nationality line was drawn at all in the contest, it was not drawn sharply.

The "Boodle" Charges

In all the hotly contested senatorial elections in Minnesota, held prior to 1890, the illegitimate use of money was charged by the losing side. In the Washburn-Nelson campaign, both sides made use of this favorite weapon of political warfare. It was first used by the Nelson forces. The Pioneer Press came out with a rather startling story to the effect that two men, known to be agents of the Canadian Pacific, were acting mysteriously among the legislators and that it was suspected they were distributing "boodle" in the interest of Washburn. It was declared that detectives had been retained to watch every movement of these evil spirits and that the consequences would be serious if members were caught with "boodle" money in their possession. Evidently nothing came of it, for after a few days no further references were made to the mysterious envoys.

When the handwriting on the wall told the story of Washburn's defeat, his backers sprung the "boodle" charge against the Nelson faction. Men even more mysterious than the two Canadian Pacific emissaries had brought an offer to the Washburn forces that for the small sum of $10,000 they would deliver fourteen votes to the senator. The offer, so ran the story, was spurned with contempt. When the Globe heard of this harrowing and heroic tale, it was unkind enough to brand it as a yarn of the most absurd kind, for the simple reason that nobody with any sense of the value of legislative votes in a neck-and-neck race would have been so foolish as to offer fourteen votes for the beggarly sum of $10,000.

In justice to the memory of Senator Washburn, it should be said that at the outset of the campaign, he declared in a letter published in the Princeton Union: "I do not propose myself, or to ask or permit any of

my friends to put a single dollar into this campaign, excepting enough to pay current expenses of my headquarters at St. Paul. If I cannot be elected squarely and honestly, I prefer to be beaten in my tracks, rather than to be involved in any disreputable or scandalous methods."

In all probability, what prompted Mr. Washburn to make this declaration was the aftermath of his contest with Sabin. If any improper proposals were made in his behalf, they were not made with his knowledge or consent—his character alone is sufficient proof of that.

That Knute Nelson used money improperly or sanctioned its use in his behalf by others, was never charged by his bitterest enemies in the fierce congressional and gubernatorial campaigns. It was therefore unnecessary for him to make any declaration like that of Washburn's when he entered the senatorial contest, and all who knew him will resent any suggestion that he sanctioned any illicit use of money in the memorable struggle of 1895.

The remarkable devotion of Nelson's followers, which accounts in large measure for his victory, is shown by this little clipping from the Globe, which gave a striking description of the dramatic legislative caucus on the night of January 18:

> His friends stuck to him with a persistency which indicated that they had drunk in the obstinate courage and bull dog fighting propensities of their chief. Representative Jacobson [the famous "hell-roaring Jake"] sounded the keynote of the situation, when he left the caucus room and met Nelson at the foot of the stairs. Giving his hat a cowboy tilt backward and grasping the hand of Nelson, he exclaimed: "Governor, we'll stand by you till hell freezes over, and there isn't a white frost yet."

Some Suppositions

Suppositions are idle, but let us stop for a moment to indulge in a few. Let us suppose that Knute Nelson had positively refused to stand as a candidate for senator against Washburn. What then would have been his future? Would he have become a member of the senate?

Yes, if he had sought the honor. He would have retired as governor in January, 1897, if he had declined a third term. If he had stood for a third term, he would have been nominated and elected, without a doubt, for there would have been just as much call for him in 1896 as in 1892 and 1894—he was his party's best bet in its war with radicalism. In either event, he would have been chosen senator by the legislature of 1901, either to succeed Cushman K. Davis, who died in 1900, or Mr. Washburn, who, with Nelson out of the race in 1895, would have served a second term. The legislature of 1901 would under no circumstances have selected two men from the Twin Cities. No other man from the country could have mustered the strength of Knute Nelson. If he had stood for Davis' seat, he would have had the support of Minneapolis as against a St. Paul man. If he had stood for Washburn's place, St. Paul would have backed him even more strongly than it did in 1895. And the country would have backed him in either case.

And what of the future, if Nelson had failed to unseat Washburn in 1895? He would have been a greatly discredited man, with lost prestige, with thousands of new enemies and no new friends. In all probability, he would never have aspired for office again.

Sought Quiet and Rest

Evidently the hardy Norseman was tired after the battle, for he did not wait until the beginning of his term as senator before resigning the governorship. Turning the keys over to "Dave," January 31, and shaking hands all around, both at the capitol and at the Merchants hotel, he packed his grip, boarded a smoking car and rode back to Alexandria. There a fourth "ratification" was held in his honor, in the form of an elaborate banquet at the Letson house. The senator-elect expressed his gratitude for the manner in which the home community had stood by him in the recent combat, referring in particular to some resolutions adopted by the

young Republicans of Alexandria. That, said he, gave him and his helpers in St. Paul renewed hope and courage. In conclusion, he asked his neighbors not to call him governor or senator, but just plain "Uncle Knute."

The new congress did not convene until December, so there would be eight months of freedom, which he proposed to spend in recreation and in the study of economic problems with which congress would have to deal in an effort to restore prosperity.

In the spring, he paid a visit to his old mother in Deerfield and was the guest of honor at a banquet arranged by Mayor and Mrs. I. O. Brictson. Thirty of the leading citizens of Deerfield participated, among them several who were "Vossings" like himself. In the speech he gave, he told the story of his first venture into politics—at Token Creek, when the balky horse kept him from running away. Of course, they all had a good laugh over this.

Unostentatious Generosity

The old homestead at Alexandria had changed. From time to time the lawyer-farmer had annexed adjoining tracts until he now had a farm of 550 acres, and the old claim shanty had given way to a comfortable, though unpretentious, dwelling of seven rooms. He had also built a substantial two-story brick building on the site of his original office. On the second floor was his office, now no longer used as a law office, but as his official headquarters. There, during the years that came, he held forth when congress was not in session, dictating letters to his stenographer and secretaries, and giving them fatherly directions. As he grew in prominence in the senate, he was allowed more and more help by the government, for his correspondence was voluminous.

For a long time he was the only Norwegian in the senate, and being at all times by far the best known Norwegian at the national capital, most of the "Norwegian business," not only in Minnesota, but of the entire country, was transacted by him. As he put it himself, whenever a Norwegian got into a misunderstanding with the

federal government, he wrote to Nelson to help straighten things out. And no matter where the unlucky individual lived—Minnesota, South Carolina or Alaska —"Uncle Knute" did all he could for him. He never turned a deaf ear. That was a beautiful, lovable trait in him.

And he was a kind-hearted, generous man, though few realized that fact; few knew the extent of his generosities, for when he gave, it was done quietly.

"One time," says Elmer E. Adams in his reminiscences of Senator Nelson, "we were coming up from St. Paul on the Great Northern and were riding in the coach, as was the senator's practice. When the conductor came around to take the tickets, he took the tickets of an immigrant woman and her children and found some of them irregular. The husband and father had gone out to Dakota and was opening up a claim and had sent for the family to follow. As was the practice in those days, the immigration agent had sold the woman tickets which were not right, and the conductor proposed to put a part of the family off at the next station. Senator Nelson heard them talking Norwegian and this aroused his interest. He went across to see what the difficulty was about, and when the conductor came around again, he said he would have to put a part of the family off to comply with the rules. The senator pulled out his pocketbook and paid the difference, some $20, and then, in his vigorous manner, denounced the railroad's policy of treating in such a manner the people who were developing the railroad's territory. It was a generous act, but he ended the incident by cautioning me never to say anything about it.

"When the cyclone visited our city" (Fergus Falls, in 1919), "he sent a generous check to be delivered to the poorest and most needy persons, and later, when some children wrote to him and told him that they were worshipping in a basement and asked him for some aid to build a church, he sent me his expense check, issued by the senate, with instructions to turn it over, if I found the solicitation regular. He did these things out of a

meager income, for he had always confined his earnings to his salary and had not been able to accumulate very much in view of the constant drain upon him from all over the state."

Knute Nelson, the Farmer

An interesting picture of Knute Nelson as a farmer and public man appeared in the St. Paul Globe in September, 1895. It was written by a member of the editorial staff, who spent a day at Alexandria for the special purpose of sizing up the new senator in his home.

The farm [says the Globe man], is in a high state of cultivation, and is covered with wheat, oats, barley, corn and potatoes. Nelson believes in diversified farming and his farm proves it. He divides his time almost equally between the farm and his office. Mrs. Nelson is authority for the statement that his affections are about equally divided between his son, Henry, his farm and "Lizzie." Lizzie is a 2-year-old colt, the descendant of a noble family of aristocratic equines, and queens it over the ranch like the daughter of a hundred earls. She is groomed, fed and petted with the master's own hand, and is the pet of the family. . . . . .

When Nelson is not at home directing the reaper or "having it out" with a carpenter, he can usually be found behind his plain pine desk at the office, attending to his large correspondence. . . . . .

He is the easiest man to interview when he wants to be, but not so if he doesn't want to be. Then he ducks the reporter with skill. . . . . He is not particular about how an interview is worded. He will tell the reporter what he wants him to know, not waiting for it to be written down and approved, but hurrying along as if his time were worth something, and leaving it to the scribe to "put on the trimmings," as the senator expresses it. And if the reporter spoils it, he never rushes into print to correct it, probably because he has learned that a corrected interview is as sad a thing as warmed over pie. . . . .

The reporter found him on his farm, in his shirt sleeves, "directing" a carpenter. He, himself, had been using a saw. When the reporter asked for an expression on the silver question: "Why, certainly, yes, sir. I can give you the solution of it in just two minutes. Look over into that field there; 80 acres of wheat, 25 bushels to the acre, 75 cents per bushel. There you are, my boy. That will settle it all. There are thousands of just such fields all over the northwest, just waiting to be threshed into streams of gold and silver dollars flowing into the farmers' pockets."

Then, chuckling a little at the manner in which he raised and crushed my hopes of an "expressive" interview, he continued: "And if that is not enough, you come with me over to the lake and I'll show you a catch of silver bass, which would stop the silver oratory of all the financiers in the country."

Then follows the description of a tour of the big farm, made by the reporter and the senator, and of the enthusiasm with which Nelson showed everything, as if there was nothing else of such interest to him in the wide world.

Besides the big farm at Alexandria, Senator Nelson had also taken over the old Nelson homestead in the town of Deerfield, Dane county, Wisconsin. This he did as a matter of sentiment. There he had spent most of his boyhood. There he had worked like a beaver to help his step-father make ends meet. Thence he walked the fourteen miles to Albion academy or rode in the ox-drawn "kubberulle," which made such an impression upon Professor Cornwall, and there his beloved mother had continued to live until in the eighties, when, upon the death of her husband, she went to the village of Deerfield to live with her younger son, William Nelson, an attorney, who later served as a member of the Wisconsin assembly.

"I used to see Knute Nelson wading around that farm in rubber boots when I was a boy," said Ludvig Hoel, a former Deerfield boy, now a Minneapolis printer. "He took great interest in the old place and owned it for years after he became United States senator, but it required too much effort for him to look after it, and he finally sold it. I thought it a queer thing for a famous United States senator to be trudging around the barn yard, in overalls and rubber boots, the way he did in sloppy weather."

Alexandria Post News, October 7, 1897: "If anyone had passed the field east of Senator Nelson's home last Friday evening, he could have seen a United States senator in the field with his coat off by the threshing machine, pitching bundles. The threshing operations had been dragging and 'Uncle Knute' took hold to make things move faster. They moved, and by dark all but a part of a stack was threshed. There is nothing Nelson enjoys as much as his farm and, as this incident shows, he has not forgotten how to run it."

Items like that in the home paper were reprinted in

other country weeklies and thus read all over the state. "Uncle Knute's" popularity with the common folk did not suffer as a consequence. It made them feel that "Knute hadn't got the big head, like most of the fellows that we send down to Washington or make governor."

Other little news items which went the rounds of the country press told about Senator Nelson's visits in Deerfield to see his mother. Every year without fail, while going from his home to the national capital or the reverse, he would pass through Deerfield in order to pay the good old soul a visit. Needless to say, the love he showed for his mother endeared him to all.

As Washington Saw Him

And while we are presenting pictures of "Uncle Knute" as the home folk saw him, let us see how eastern writers described the lone Norwegian of the United States senate during the first years of his service.

"Senator Knute Nelson is one of the most striking figures who ever sat in that body," was the verdict of the Monthly Illustrator and Home and Country, New York, in April, 1896. "Though the first Norwegian to win a seat in the upper house of the American congress, he would be taken in person for a New England farmer, and as he came to America when only six years old, he speaks English as well as any of his fellow senators."

George Alfred Townsend, noted Washington correspondent, in the Philadelphia Times, July 4, 1897:

> He [Nelson] has somewhat the habits of people who live where the days are long, and I came upon his tracks many times, but missed the man. He lives on Capitol hill, six squares east of the new library, but by 7 o'clock every morning, or when the doors of the Ebbit house open nearly two miles from his house, he walks into his breakfast, the first one there. . . . . When the senator finally walked forth, I saw an apparent Anglo-American of the period of Decatur, when the hair was worn curled and Lord Byron was the international British type.
>
> Mr. Nelson is above the medium size, rather broad set, with an address of both decision and generosity. He has perfectly blue eyes, bright, but not large, and nearly classical features; a fine nose, more refined than notable; a chin with a short goatee, his only beard, and

the lower part of his face is as courageous as the forehead and orbits are gentle, and ruling by good nature. . . . . .

He spoke in English without any other than a slight Yorkshire or mid-province accent and with a grasp of the subjects I intended to present more remarkable than in any other senator I have interviewed. His blue eyes imbibed the questions as if from mine, and he poured the answer forth with a firm diction like a reading from an old Messinger's blank verse.

Visit to Norway

In the summer of 1899, Senator Nelson gratified a long cherished desire to revisit the scenes of his tender childhood in Voss, Norway, and to make a tour through the homeland and other European countries. Landing at Bergen, he first went to Evanger, Voss, where he was born. He hired a horse and for eight days drove here and there, stopping at various farms to talk with the people. He was greeted with flags in many places. At Vossevangen, they were flying everywhere. The wonderful fairy tale had come true. A penniless lad, born there in a small log cabin, had gone to a new unknown world; had struggled to get bread, butter, clothes and an education; had fought to save his new country; had prospered—was wealthy in the eyes of the "bonder" of Voss—had become famous and powerful—was one of the "princes, lords and rulers of the land."

The distinguished son of Voss was tendered a banquet in the chief town of the parish and presented a splendid horn, mounted on a silver statuet. Everybody was glad and everybody was proud to do honor to Knute Nelson.

The senator found two sisters of his mother, and a joy it was for those two women to see their famous nephew from the "new world" face to face. And how they asked a million questions about sister Ingeborg!

Returning to Bergen, Nelson sailed along the coast to Trondhjem, where he visited the great cathedral—Norway's chief architectural pride—and thence crossed to Stockholm, where, unknown to officials and the American minister, he spent eight days in the museums and galleries, studying the rare treasures of art and other

interesting exhibits—which shows his interest in the cultural attainments of his race. He registered quietly at a good hotel, without letting anybody know who he was, so that there would be no fuss over him, interfering with his sight-seeing. Indeed, he traveled incognito everywhere in Scandinavia, except in Voss.

From Stockholm, he went across the south of Sweden to Toten, in southern Norway, where his wife was born. He saw her birthplace and visited several of her relatives.

When Nelson reached Oslo, he again tried to hide his identity, but, unfortunately, after three days, a Norwegian from America, who knew him and chanced to see him, informed the city officials. So, for five days in succession, there was fuss in the day time and banquets in the evenings, with but little opportunity to study and look over things of historic interest.

From Oslo, the senator went to Denmark, then to Holland and Belgium, where he visited the field of Waterloo. Crossing to England, he stayed two weeks in London, being present at the opening of parliament. He found in Europe great respect for the United States on account of its swift and decisive defeat of Spain in the war just ended. He told the Post News editor, upon his return to Alexandria, that he came home prouder than ever of his adopted country.

Chapter XV

PARTY GUIDE AND MENTOR

Soon after his return from Europe, in 1899, Knute Nelson resumed cordial relations with Minneapolis. A state of war existed for some years after the Washburn-Nelson fight between the senator and some of the leading Republicans of Minnesota's chief city. Especially was this the case in 1896, when Hennepin county exerted itself to defeat Governor Clough in his campaign for nomination to succeed himself in the executive chair. At that time Nelson wrote a number of "personal and confidential" letters to friends, urging them to support Clough.

> Gen. Washburn and the Minneapolis Journal [said he, in one of these letters], have lost no opportunity to attack and insult me since my election to the senate. They are now engaged in a warfare against Governor Clough, not so much because he is not qualified or has not made a good governor, as to punish him for helping to elect me to the senate and thereby securing his own promotion. Their campaign against Clough is carried on with the two-fold purpose of defeating him and humiliating me. From week to week I am made the subject of insult and caricature either in the Journal or, if more than usually gross, in its democratic issue—the Times. I am working hard, early and late, trying to serve and represent our state creditably and to the best of my ability. In view of these facts, I hope that you and other friends will not aid those who are conducting such warfare against Governor Clough and myself, but will see that Clough is sustained and that I have fair play.

Unfortunately, the "friend" who received this letter had either turned cold or lost it, and the missive found its way into the sanctum of the Journal. Then there was something doing. The Journal made a facsimile of the letter, three columns wide, and published it in a place of honor—at the top of the front page. The editorial comments in the same issue were not exactly complimentary to Knute Nelson and the war between him and Hennepin county took on new vigor. Senator Nelson, however, had the satisfaction of seeing his friend Clough

triumph in the state convention and elected by a slender plurality in the fall. But he never again took a hand in a gubernatorial primary campaign in Minnesota.

Nothing came up during the next three years to cause any further friction, and soon after Nelson's return from Europe, the following appeared in the Minneapolis Tribune:

> As foretold by the Tribune some time ago, the war which has been waged between the senator and some leading Republicans of Minneapolis for years past, is at an end. Both parties to the controversy are convinced that the interests of the state and the Republican party will be best served by a cessation of hostilities and common sense rules again. Senator Nelson yesterday, for the first time in years, met all Minneapolis callers half way and with cordiality. He put up at a prominent hotel and his coming was heralded in advance. His latchstring was out, and it is understood that from now on he will resume the old friendly relations which existed in years of old, when he was governor and congressman, and counted upon the voters of Hennepin as his friends and well-wishers.
>
> Every Republican in the state should be glad that this trouble is now settled. It increases the party's chances for success in the coming campaign, and it will undoubtedly result in the unanimous reelection of the senator next year.

This tactful editorial was reprinted and commented on favorably by the Alexandria Post News and by other Republican papers in the state. From that time until the end of his life, Senator Nelson was the unchallenged leader of the Republican party in Minnesota and wielded a greater influence within the party than any other citizen. In 1901 and 1907, no candidate vied with him for the indorsement of the Republican party as its candidate for senator, and while he had a rival for the Republican nomination in 1912 and 1918, the result of the primaries was never in doubt, a vast majority of the party leaders standing with Nelson. His competitor in both instances was James A. Peterson, Minneapolis, who made a very active campaign in 1912, backed by many leaders of the so-called progressive faction of the party.

Not a Machine Politician

Senator Nelson neither desired nor attempted to build a political machine. During his regime as governor and

for a dozen years or more while senator, he had some sort of organization, but it would not be correct to call it a political machine, like the Quay and Penrose machine in Pennsylvania, the Tammany Hall organization in New York, or even the La Follette organization in Wisconsin. Except in the single instance of 1896, when he interfered in behalf of Governor Clough, it was never charged that Nelson ever assumed the role of a dictator within the Republican party. He was entirely too shrewd and wise for that.

It is true that toward the end he wrote a few letters to certain candidates for office, commending their candidacies, with the understanding that the letters might be published, but it would scarcely be fair to call these expressions an attempt at dictation. In no instance was the office sought of great importance and in each case the senator used guarded language. He was pestered by all sorts of candidates for "endorsements" to be used in their campaigns, but, with the exceptions named, declined the use of his name.

The position he occupied in the politics of Minnesota was not, in many respects, unlike that of William B. Allison in Iowa for over thirty years. It was that of a dignified party guide and mentor, not of a boss or dictator.

Active for Republican Party

After the primaries, Senator Nelson was always active for the success of his party, except in the last few years of his life. It was he that the Republicans of the state generally relied upon to "fire the opening gun"—to issue the party's proclamation, to furnish the "campaign thunder" for the lesser speakers and workers. These opening speeches of the senator were always carefully prepared and advance copies were furnished to the leading Republican dailies of Minnesota, so that immediately after their delivery, the people of the entire state had them spread before their eyes. In these speeches Nelson showed his comprehensive knowledge of the campaign issues, his keen insight into the problems of the

day, and his wide range of information on the affairs of government. As was fitting, he devoted most of his attention in these addresses to national events and issues —to an account of his party's stewardship, if it had been in control at Washington. If it had not been in power, his address was mainly a review of the alleged misdeeds of the Democratic party.

While it may be stated that Senator Nelson was just as unbiased as most American statesmen when he took the stump, it must not be supposed that in his campaign utterances he spoke with the impartiality of a great historian or disinterested student of government. The conclusions he drew, like those of all partisans, were largely based upon party prejudice. In the United States senate, however, especially toward the end, he spoke very frequently as a true statesman, who upheld the right as he saw it, without regard to the wishes of party managers and party leaders.

The McKenzie Episode

An interesting incident, greatly to Nelson's credit, occurred in the campaign of 1900. He was invited to deliver an address at Grand Forks in behalf of the Republican state ticket of North Dakota, but bluntly refused, saying that he would never speak for the Republican party in the sister commonwealth so long as its politics was dominated by Alexander McKenzie. McKenzie, for many years the Republican king of North Dakota, had been in Alaska, where he created a scandal, which led to his incarceration in a federal prison for contempt of court.

He was accused of conspiring to obtain possession of the richest mining claims by having various men, hired for the purpose, institute contests against the owners and having himself appointed receiver by the federal judge at Nome, who was under his influence. In this manner he came into full control of the richest claims at Nome, and was in a position to convert the gold mined to his own use. Many of the miners were Scandinavians, and Senator Nelson had been in direct communication with

them. The plot of Rex Beach's famous novel, "The Spoilers," revolves about this alleged conspiracy of Alexander McKenzie.

At the time Nelson refused to speak at Grand Forks and denounced McKenzie's conduct, the North Dakota boss was still in control at Nome and still innocent in the eyes of the law, but Nelson was sure of his guilt and had the courage to speak his mind. He was sharply criticized at the time for his statements and McKenzie swore vengeance against him. He found, however, that he could accomplish nothing against Nelson in Minnesota, and the next year, when the circuit court of appeals of California scathingly denounced McKenzie's conduct and sent him to prison, Nelson was completely vindicated.

"Nelson," said the Post News, in commenting on the Grand Forks incident, "does not wait to size up political consequences when he has to deal with men of the McKenzie stripe, and when McKenzie and his crowd came to Minnesota loaded with money, to attempt Mr. Nelson's defeat for re-election, they very quickly found that Minnesota is not North Dakota."

McKenzie died in St. Paul a few years ago. He was a remarkable character, daring and romantic.

Years of Contentment

The years that followed Nelson's second election as United States senator were, perhaps, the happiest and most contented period of his life and also among the most fruitful in beneficial service to his country. The rancor and the strife brought on by Populism had abated. He was then at the height of his popularity, enjoying the good will and the affection of the home folk in a marked degree, and highly esteemed by his colleagues and associates in Washington. And his prestige was great. The untimely passing of Cushman K. Davis, in December, 1900, left him the senior senator from Minnesota and easily the foremost public man in the state.

On February 2, 1903, he was the guest of honor at a banquet in Washington, arranged by the Minnesota delegation in congress and other senators and representa-

tives, in commemoration of his sixtieth birthday anniversary. Senator Moses E. Clapp, Minnesota, presided as toastmaster and paid a feeling tribute, testifying to Senator Nelson's unusual popularity in the state and the nation. Senator J. P. Dolliver, Iowa, in behalf of the gathering, presented the guest of honor with a beautiful silver tea service, appropriately inscribed. The silver-tongued Dolliver made a happy speech, in which he reviewed the Norseman's interesting career and praised his rare qualities as a senator and man. Others who spoke were Senators Clark, Wyoming, and Kittredge, South Dakota, and Congressman G. N. Haugen, Iowa. Senator Clark referred humorously to Nelson's remarkable achievement in overturning a majority of the judiciary committee and obtaining a favorable report on his bankruptcy bill and its subsequent passage by both branches of congress.

President Roosevelt sent the following message: "My dear Senator Clapp—May I, through you, congratulate Senator Nelson? No sturdier stock has come to this country than from the Scandinavians, and they have a right to be proud of putting into public life a man whom we are all delighted to hold as typical of the best standard of American citizenship. I only wish I could be present with you and shake Senator Nelson's hand."

When Nelson was called, the gathering rose and burst into cheers. He was deeply moved and could hardly speak—said he never felt so embarrassed in his life.

Visit to Alaska

After the adjournment of congress the same year, Senator Nelson paid a visit to Alaska as member of a special senate committee, appointed to investigate the needs of the territory, with a view to recommending appropriate legislation. The committee was composed of Senators W. P. Dillingham, Vermont, chairman; H. E. Burnham, New Hampshire; Thomas M. Patterson, Colorado, and Nelson. The party sailed from Seattle June 28 and did not return until August 27. They went to Skagway, stopping on the way at Juneau. From Skagway they pro-

ceeded to Dawson, thence down the Yukon to St. Michaels, Nome, Seal islands, Unalaska and numerous points along the coast.

The senators studied the needs and interests of Alaska commercially and politically and their investigations resulted in the enactment of important legislation affecting the territory. In the past, important Alaska bills had failed of passage for want of definite information on the subject. Of all the senators in the party, Nelson was by far the most interested, and he saw and learned more than all the others. Indeed, it is said that when the rest saw how eagerly Nelson took hold of the work in hand, they felt there was no need of special efforts on their part. Nelson would find out what there was to learn.

And Nelson enjoyed himself immensely. Early and late he was on the go, poking into this and into that, talking Norwegian with the Norwegians, Swedish with the Swedes and English with the Irish and the Yankees. Sometimes he mounted a horse, so he could cover more territory, and rode for miles to outlying settlements. His training as a cavalryman in the Civil war served him well here.

So it came about that from that day to the end of his life, Nelson was the best informed senator or congressman on Alaska—the man to whom the people of the territory looked to guard and promote their interests. He was, in fact, Alaska's own senator.

Favorite Occasions for Speeches

When Knute Nelson was at home, he was always in demand as a speaker on all sorts of occasions. He was always accommodating and every summer delivered addresses on a variety of subjects. But the gatherings he enjoyed above all others were old settlers' reunions or picnics, Memorial day observances, G. A. R. reunions, and farmers' institutes and fairs. He took pleasure in speaking at such "doings" and was always cordially received. He was one of the founders of the Douglas

County Fair association—back in 1874—and always took a keen interest in the county fairs held at Alexandria.

The old settlers' meetings delighted him, because they brought together his pioneer friends. There was nothing that pleased him more than to meet the friends of frontier days, when there were no railroads or telephones, no society "trimmings" and pretense, but rugged simplicity and democracy. Many of the letters he wrote in his later years were to these old friends, both in Wisconsin and Minnesota. When he was called upon to speak at these pioneer gatherings, he delighted in telling about his own early experiences and to make humorous reference to graybeards in the crowd whom he knew particularly well. And how those graybeards laughed and how tickled they were to be thus singled out by the senator! The language he used in these talks was simplicity itself—homely, natural, conversational—absolutely no attempts at rhetoric or "high sounding" phrases, as Tom Brown expressed it.

His fondness for fairs was, of course, due to his interest in agriculture and the fact that they brought together so many of his farmer friends. And the Memorial day observances and G. A. R. reunions appealed to him because of his deep feeling for the old boys in blue. At the reunions, he was fond of telling about his own experiences in the army and to pay tributes to the bravery of his comrades. His Memorial day addresses bring out few, if any, new thoughts or ideas, but are peculiarly appropriate to the occasion.

Notable State Fair Address

The most notable address he ever delivered at a fair was on the opening day of the Minnesota state fair in September, 1904. In it he gave utterance to much sane philosophy on national expansion, immigration, agriculture and the American farmer. It was non-political, though delivered in the midst of a campaign, broad in scope and dignified in style.

Discussing the wonderful growth of our country, he ascribed it to two chief reasons:

> An ample supply of fertile lands and a liberal and advanced method in disposing of the same, and the policy of establishing and fostering manufacturing interests, and building up a home market for our agricultural products and abundant raw materials. . . . But the tendency of such a liberal land policy was, by itself, to make us a nation of farmers, ultimately to be weighed down by the volume and momentum of our production. . . . The founders of the republic were wise enough to see that, however much they might encourage and foster agriculture with liberal land laws, diversified industries, with an ample home market, were essential for complete agricultural success. . . . We are today not only the greatest agricultural, but also the greatest manufacturing nation in the world.

He was a thorough-going expansionist, in the days when expansion, or "imperialism," was an issue following the Spanish-American war which gave us the Philippines and the acquisition of Hawaii.

"The spirit of expansion," said he in his state fair address, "which possessed Jefferson and our country in 1803, has been upon us ever since. We started out as a nation with an area of 909,050 square miles. We have now an area of 3,745,781 square miles. We have never made a territorial expansion, but what at the time many good people questioned the wisdom of it. But there has long since ceased to be a doubt or question as to any of it, except the Philippine islands. And as the years roll by we shall no doubt all reach the same conclusion as to these islands that we have long ago reached in respect to our other territorial acquisitions. The older ones among you can well remember how many wise but short-sighted statesmen ridiculed the acquisition of Alaska. They said it was the purchase of nothing but a wilderness of eternal snow and icebergs. But during the fiscal year ending June 30, 1904, the output of coal, silver and other minor metals amounted to $26,383,593 and the gold output was $6,352,028."

Then he endorsed with enthusiasm the liberal immigration policy of the "founders of this state," declaring that "in the course of time, gradually and inevitably, our different ethnological elements will assimilate and

coalesce into a homogeneous people, into a new race, as it were; a race and people not wholly the counterpart of any of the several elements, but the quintessence of all. Teutonic and Scandinavian industry and perseverance, Celtic bravery and versatility will be enforced with Yankee ingenuity and vim, and all this happily blended into one perfect manhood—the Minnesotan of the future. You and I will not see him. He will be our great-grandchild—perhaps more remote. He will be neither like the Anglo-Saxon of Great Britain, nor like the Yankee of New England, but he will be every inch an American, in language, spirit and aspirations."

To the last Knute Nelson remained an enthusiastic, uncompromising expansionist. He refused to consider the relinquishment of the Philippines even for a moment. Our flag is there and there it shall remain. Closing, he visualized the great part played by the farmers in the nation.

"The American farmer is the monarch and owner of the land he tills, and with the American farmer rests today the controlling powers in the affairs of state. He is one of the chief mainstays of our political, social and economic fabrics, sober, conservative and mindful of the welfare of the republic and not subject to the fluctuations that sometimes take place among the urban population."

Nelson showed profound respect and reverence for the memory of Thomas Jefferson. In his speeches he mentioned the patron saint of Democracy far more frequently than he spoke of Alexander Hamilton, which indicates that his view of things historical and political was radically different from that of the Republicans of New England. Like his tariff stand, it suggests that he never lived entirely down his pre-Civil war leanings in politics.

Death of Only Son

The happiness and contentment which marked Nelson's life during his first and second terms in the United States senate, gave way to sorrow in 1908 when his only son, Henry K. Nelson, died at the age of thirty-three

years. He was a bright young man, but wayward, and caused his father much worry and anxiety. Though deeply vexed at the youngster's pranks, he loved him just the same—all the more, it would seem. Father and son were both of a belligerent disposition and had many clashes which were intense while they lasted, but always resulted in reconciliations and increased affection. Some of these squalls or storms caused no little amusement in the home community.

Mr. Adams tells about one: "He (the senator) started Henry in business several times, only to have him seriously neglect it. At one time he started him in the hardware business in Alexandria in a store which was directly beneath the senator's office. One day the senator went to the store and found it absolutely abandoned. He went to a pool hall two or three doors away, and found Henry engaged in a game with some of his companions and, just as any good father should do, he took Henry by the ear and led him back to the store and told him to attend to business or he would close up the store. That night Henry flew to the Pacific coast. Like all fathers, who have to spank a son, the senator was sorry the minute it was over, but it took a trip to the coast to get Henry to return."

An interesting situation developed in 1900, when Henry became a candidate for representative to the legislature from Grant county. He had been in business at Elbow Lake for some time, and asked for the Republican nomination. He was opposed by some of the party leaders, foremost of whom was W. H. Goetzinger, editor of the Grant County Herald and chairman of the Republican county committee. Henry triumphed in the convention, whereupon Mr. Goetzinger informed him that he would not support him in the Herald and would resign from the county committee. Henry received this announcement with indifference, if not contempt, expressing his feelings in characteristic language, and set out to line up the voters in his usual "rough and ready" style.

In the course of the campaign, Senator Nelson delivered a political speech at Barret, Grant county, in behalf

of the Republican ticket, from president down, and took occasion to refer to his son's candidacy. He informed the audience that he did not wish to see his son enter the contest and had hoped that he would be defeated for the nomination. But he was nominated and was the candidate of the Republican party. Therefore, he wanted him elected and hoped that the Republicans of the county would stand by him. After the meeting, he inquired if Mr. Goetzinger was in the audience and, being answered in the affirmative, requested that word be brought to Mr. Goetzinger that he wished to see him at the hotel.

> I went to the hotel, [said Mr. Goetzinger, in a recent talk with the author], and the senator took me up to his room and carefully locked the door. I had not forgotten the Sauby incident and began to suspect that I was in for it. The senator brought out a box of black cigars and offered me one, which I declined, as I did not smoke.
>
> 'I understand,' said he, 'that you are not supporting my son for representative. I don't know what the trouble is between you, but I want to tell you that, although Henry has his faults, he is not a bad boy, and I want you to support him.'
>
> I expressed my regret, but informed the senator that it was impossible for me to comply with his request, as I did not regard his son as a fit person to send to the legislature and I had announced my determination not to support him. Senator Nelson then stopped asking and began to demand that I support his son, as a matter of party duty, and when I still persisted in my refusal he became very indignant and used pretty strong language.

Henry was elected, along with the rest of the Republican candidates, and served one term in the legislature. He took his wild habits with him to St. Paul, but, though guilty of a number of escapades, did not by his conduct bring dishonor upon his distinguished father and was popular with most of his colleagues.

How deeply Senator Nelson felt the loss of his only son, this, from a letter written in 1911, shows: "I had only one son, who was a good, bright boy. He served one term in the legislature and voted for my second election; was in the hardware business on his own account in a small town several years in Minnesota; finally, five years ago, he moved to the Pacific coast. He was in

good health when he moved there, but was taken sick with consumption, grew weaker and weaker, and we finally sent him to Colorado Springs in hope he might recover, but he lingered about a year in a sanitarium and finally died three years ago. . . . Since his death I have felt rather lonesome, and the world has not seemed as bright to me as it did before, and I have not had the ambition to dig and work as formerly."

"More than once, while we were talking about his son, during the years that followed Henry's death, have I seen the tears run down Senator Nelson's cheeks," said Mr. James S. Arneson, an old Grant county friend of Henry Nelson, to the biographer.

Mother's Death Followed Soon

In less than two years came another bereavement. The senator's aged mother was called home November 29, 1910, at Deerfield. She was over ninety-six years old, but was in possession of her mental faculties until a few days before the end, and had been sitting up only a few weeks before her death. Senator Nelson was with her before she lost consciousness, having stopped off to see her while on his way to Washington for the opening of congress. On Thanksgiving day, just a few days preceding her death, all of her three sons were present; also two grandsons and three great grandsons. It was a kindly act of Providence that made it possible for the good woman's best loved son to be with her when the shadows closed about her.

Relations With Roosevelt

As indicated by President Roosevelt's greetings to Senator Nelson at the sixtieth anniversary banquet, the best of feeling prevailed between the famous president and the senator—except during the Ballinger-Pinchot controversy and the campaign of 1912. Senator Nelson was a staunch champion of the Roosevelt policies during the Roosevelt regime, and not only favored the "rough rider" for a second, but a third term, giving out an interview in 1907 that he believed the interests of the Repub-

lican party and the country would be best served by the president's continuation in office until March 4, 1913.

In 1906, when a remark dropped by Senator LaFollette in a speech at Mankato was construed as an attack on the course pursued by Nelson in the fight over railway rate regulation in the preceding session of congress, President Roosevelt declared emphatically in a letter to the late General J. H. Baker that "it is a matter of simple justice to say that Senator Nelson was one of the most potent forces in securing passage of the interstate commerce law in the excellent shape in which it passed. I was in close touch with him at all stages of the contest and he and I were in entire harmony throughout. Senator Nelson was one of the men to whom we owe most in connection with the passage of the measure, and who acted throughout with transparent good faith and courage."

Roosevelt, however, disapproved of Nelson's handling of the Ballinger investigation in 1910, and his feelings toward the senator cooled still more when the latter failed to support him for president as the "Bull Moose" candidate in 1912; but during the World war, after Nelson had first voted against the McLemore resolution—the only member of Minnesota's congressional delegation that so voted—and had stood for the declaration of war against Germany and its vigorous prosecution, the former president felt more enthusiastic over the Viking senator than ever before, and in a speech in Minneapolis lauded him to the skies, contrasting his splendid Americanism and patriotism with the recalcitrant attitude of certain other senators that came in for his forceful castigation.

Picture of Nelson in 1911

But it is time for another picture of Nelson's life in Washington. Here is a good one, drawn by Cleve W. Van Dyke, an old Alexandria boy, who wrote from first-hand knowledge. It appeared in the Daily Silver Belt of Arizona, in September, 1911:

He [Nelson] brings to the senate his farm habits and goes to work at 7 o'clock in the morning. All of his secretaries and clerks are expected to be in their places when the whistle blows way out on East Capitol street, in a portion of the city devoted to modest homes, in a family neighborhood, where neighbors are just friends and formal society never breaks through to disturb his evenings, for, like every honest toiler, the senator goes to bed early. He walks to and from the capitol in all kinds of weather. He is a serious, earnest man with work to do, and he does it thoroughly. These 'toiler' habits have given him the reputation of being the hardest worker in the senate, and many a duty, which should be performed by his colleagues, is thrust upon him in the full confidence that when Nelson reports everything will have been thoroughly and honestly done.

That accounts in part for Nelson's great influence in the senate and for his extraordinary legislative achievements.

Notable Home-Comings

It is also time to introduce another Alexandria "celebration." One was held on the night of August 30, 1911. Nelson had just returned from an unsually long stay in Washington, during which he had taken a very prominent part in the strenuous fight over the Canadian reciprocity treaty. President Taft, backed by the east and the south, made every effort to force through the senate this treaty, against the protests of the farmers of the northwest. Nelson believed that his section of the country would suffer heavily, if, as the treaty provided, Canada would be permitted to send her wheat across the line without paying duty. He was, perhaps, the leading figure in the fight on the side of the northwestern farmers, and his work was appreciated in Douglas county. The recent completion of Alexandria's federal building, a handsome structure obtained for the village through Nelson's efforts, also added to his popularity.

The "celebration," like that of 1895, when he returned victorious from St. Paul as senator-elect, took the form of a complimentary dinner at the Letson house. It was one of the finest functions of its kind in the history of the village, with Senator C. J. Gunderson as the spokesman of the gathering in bidding the senator welcome. Glancing backward through the years, Mr. Gunderson

recalled a similar occasion, when Nelson was first elected governor, and his neighbors had gathered to celebrate the event. On that occasion, Mr. Nelson had expressed the hope that when his term as governor expired, he might find that he had retained the kindly appreciation of his neighbors.

"In the light of subsequent events," said Mr. Gunderson, "it is manifest that the wish has been fulfilled. We can say that we not only appreciate his services, but that we are more proud of him today than at any time in the history of his career. His acts and his record need no encomiums. His name will stand in Minnesota with those of Windom and Ramsey and Cushman K. Davis. These are the names of which we shall all be proud. This gathering is eminently appropriate. It is proper that at his home-coming there should be some manifestation of the feeling which all possess."

Senator Nelson's reply was one of the most heartfelt talks he ever delivered to his neighbors.

> I can scarcely tell you how much I appreciate this evidence of your good will. It will be a comfort to me in my declining years to know I have your confidence. I have endeavored to deal honestly; I have aimed to do right as God gave me to see it. . . . While in the public service I shall always endeavor to be a credit and an honor to Alexandria and do nothing which might bring discredit to my neighbors and friends.

Rule of Action as a Public Servant

In the course of his address, the senator enunciated his rule of action as a public man: "I have tried to do what I believed to be right, and have never hesitated, when I thought my party wrong, to break over the traces. It has been my aim to move along safe lines and not play to the galleries. I am not disposed to give out interviews with papers. I prefer to do what I can quietly."

Only a year later another demonstration of the home community's good will and regard was staged at Alexandria. This time it was in the form of an outdoor gathering, first at the Great Northern railway station, when the senator arrived from Washington, and after-

ward on the court house grounds. The time of his arrival was known beforehand and a committee of citizens had arranged a reception or welcome home. The nonpartisan character of the demonstration is shown by the political complexion of the speakers, one of whom was Doctor Gilkinson, Osakis, the Democratic candidate for congressman in the Sixth district. In 1911 the senator had intimated his intention of retiring, as he was growing old and had a horror, so it was announced in Washington dispatches, of tottering about the senate chamber in an enfeebled state, both physical and mental. For many months he had kept the state guessing as to his plans before his final determination to accept a fourth term. In his talk Senator Gunderson referred to Mr. Nelson's proposed retirement, saying:

"But, upon mature reflection, the people of the state had said they did not know where they could get a man who could so well serve them. And when the people call him, we feel he will respond the same as he did in 1861 when the country was in peril. When we call again, he will answer and take up the fight of the people."

In his remarks, Senator Nelson was both serious and humorous, and gave interesting expression to his personal philosophy and view of the essentials in life and government.

Those who know me, [said he], know that I always talk best when I am fighting mad. Now, I am in anything but that condition today. It is 41 years since I came among you. It was my lot to enter the political field in the early days. . . . I have never thought myself a great statesman—only one of the rank and file. [He doubtless saw himself in his mind's eye when he said this, marching as a common soldier in the Union army]. I have done the best I could, have made mistakes, but the people of Alexandria and Minnesota have always been generous. . . .

We all realize that laws and the constitution are not as important as character and the moral status of the people. However active we may be in passing stringent legislation, laws and decisions will prove noneffective unless we instill in the American people a better spirit and a better conscience. It is the struggle to get rich that is at the bottom of our evil. Our churches and our schools have a greater work to do. . . . than our executive officers. Unless we can engender a new spirit, legislation will accomplish little. A great deal has been said in favor of more arbitrary legislation and the more

effective enforcement of laws. All necessary, but unless we engender that new spirit, enforcement of law is abortive. In Central America they have good laws, a good constitution, and they ought to have as good a government as ours, but government there is a failure because the people are not educated up to the constitution. In Canada the people's respect for the law comes from training. We are not up to that old English spirit which aims to respect the law.

Chapter XVI

THE GRAND OLD MAN OF MINNESOTA

"Age has turned his hair and beard white, but it has not taken the spring out of his step, nor has it dimmed the lustre of the most wonderful blue eyes ever placed in the head of a son of Norway."

So wrote George F. Authier, the Minneapolis Tribune's Washington correspondent, in January, 1916, of Knute Nelson, then approaching the seventy-third anniversary of his birth. As is usually true of men whose hair and beard are black in their youth, the Viking's head was crowned with snow before he attained the allotted three score years and ten. That gave him a patriarchal and benign appearance—except when he was angry. Then the benignity gave way to danger signals—flashes of lightning beneath the beetling brows.

It was about the time of his fourth election to the United States senate that the people of Minnesota began to call him the "Grand Old Man," and from then to the end that was his most common title. Nothing shows better the high esteem in which he was held. It is a title not lightly bestowed by the people. It has never been borne anywhere by men lacking in true grandeur of character. It was given to Knute Nelson because the best minds had come to believe firmly in his integrity, in the unselfishness of his motives as a public servant, in the loftiness of his patriotism, in the strength of his character, in the purity of his life.

Knute Nelson outgrew many things. He discarded the garb of the politician and put on the robes of the statesman. He no longer wrote such letters as he did to Luth Jaeger in the early eighties, cunningly laying his plans to marshal the Scandinavian vote in his behalf because he was a Norwegian. As a candidate he now relied solely upon his merits as an American citizen. He no longer fought for office with inexhaustible energy,

but let it be known that he would serve on the sole condition that a majority of the people wanted him as their servant in Washington and would elect him without any special effort or campaign on his part. And in this he was doubtless sincere. It was no mere pretense.

Birthday Election and Banquet

On February 3, 1913, for the first and only time in the history of Minnesota—perhaps of any state—a senator was chosen by unanimous vote. Mr. Nelson, who had been nominated by the Republicans in the primaries and had obtained a majority in the election, received the vote of every member of the legislature. That was because the Keefe law, then in force, provided that the members of the legislature should be bound by the verdict of the people, as expressed at the polls. Senator Nelson's Democratic opponent in November was Daniel W. Lawler, his one-time rival for governor.

The election was timed to take place on the seventieth anniversary of Nelson's birthday, but as that fell on Sunday, he was chosen the next day. He was invited to address the legislature on the day of his election and to be the guest of honor at a banquet in the evening. This was held in the Masonic Temple, St. Paul. It was attended by about 800 citizens of the state, including the state senators and representatives. The toastmaster was Eli S. Warner, St. Paul, who said, in a humorous vein, that "eighteen years ago, as a member of the legislature, I helped to elect Knute Nelson senator, when it wasn't quite so unanimous."

The climax of the festive occasion came when Governor A. O. Eberhart presented Nelson his certificate of election and a massive silver loving cup, the gift of his Minnesota friends. The governor tendered the cup to Senator Nelson as "the most faithful servant Minnesota has ever had, who has proclaimed less and achieved more than any other son of the state. . . . This cup represents the good wishes and good will of the Republican majority, the Democratic minority, the Populist solidarity and the Bull Moose futurity."

The guests rose and cheered as Governor Eberhart handed Nelson the cup and laid a huge bouquet of white roses at his place.

This was too much for the Norwegian immigrant—he was completely unnerved. To give him time to recover, the toastmaster called upon James J. Hill for an impromptu talk.

"It is a splendid thing," said Mr. Hill, who was a master speaker as well as a master builder, "that the people should send a man to Washington who has stood for things orderly and peaceful and for good government as Senator Nelson has. He is faithful, and if he thinks he is right, he is a little more stubborn than a government mule. I have watched Mr. Nelson's career. He always has tried to distinguish the underlying principles of truth, and there you would find him, if he was all alone. This is an unusual culmination for such a career, to see him given the indorsement of all parties.

"I have differed with Senator Nelson, but I have forgiven him because I always knew where I could put my hand on him. If he was against you, you would know it, and if he was for you, you would know it, and you did not have to sit up nights to watch him."

In his reply, Senator Nelson did not pretend to deliver an address. He merely gave a chatty talk about a number of things, including the trust question; told reminiscences of Mr. Hill and, because he knew that Cyrus Northrop was to follow him, told how, as a member of the board of regents, he had helped to bring the distinguished orator and educator to the presidency of the state university.

"He (Nelson) is a statesman and not a politician jumping around inside a statesman's shoes," said Doctor Northrop. "He originates much legislation that tells for the country's welfare and supports such legislation when it is originated by others. He is eminently independent and courageous. He is a lawyer who understands that law is a rule of action and that the constitution is a rule of laws, and that both are necessary for the orderly and peaceful life of a republic. He is con-

servative of the things that are good and progressive toward the things that are best. Senator Nelson has kept in touch with the people, as Lincoln did, not by effusive flattery of the people, but by never ceasing himself to be of the people. The halo of a unanimous re-election after eighteen years of service is a well deserved expression of the people's appreciation. Well done, good and faithful servant."

Other addresses in praise of the honor guest were delivered by Senator C. J. Gunderson, Alexandria; Representative W. I. Nolan, Minneapolis, now lieutenant governor, and Representative Albert Pfaender, New Ulm.

Take it all in all, it is doubtful whether any other man in the history of Minnesota ever received such a wealth of honor and glory on a single day as did Knute Nelson on February 3, 1913. And it is to be doubted whether any other occasion brought together such a notable triumvirate of Minnesota leaders as Hill, Northrop and Nelson. Each at the time was without a peer in his field. Each had wonderful strength of character and of intellect. Each had attained the heights of achievement. Each was drawing near the end of a long and illustrious career.

Got Ford Touring Car in 1916

The automobile fever swept over America in the beginning of the present century, but Knute Nelson was not among its victims. He stuck to the horse and buggy, the street car and the railway train. For many years he refused to ride in an automobile, let alone own one. In the campaign of 1906, when he spoke one night at several Republican meetings in Minneapolis, the managers found it hard to get him to the various halls on schedule, because they had to transport him in hacks instead of automobiles.

But on September 30, 1916, when he addressed a great rally at Sundburg, Kandiyohi county, lo and behold! the senator appeared in a brand new Ford touring car. He had surrendered to the enemy of faithful Dobbin. He

had invested some of his hard earned senate wages in Henry Ford's latest. He made the trip across country from Alexandria to Sundburg in the new mile eater, with his private secretary at the wheel. Everything went fine, as the roads were pretty smooth, and after that he made good use of his new conveyance and enjoyed riding in it along the highways of the beautiful Park Region which he loved so well.

That was a great meeting at Sundburg, with thousands in attendance. A special train, with several hundred passengers, was run from Minneapolis, and the country folk drove in from far and near. The old senator felt exhilarated after his ride in the new Ford, took off his coat and went at his speech with a will.

"You should have seen those Swedes and Norwegians stand around with their mouths wide open, drinking in every word," declared Judge V. D. Crandall of Robbinsdale, in telling about it; he was there. "It was easy to see why Nelson was so strong in the state—a glance at those Scandinavian farmers was all you needed for proof."

President Wilson's Tribute

Senator Nelson's Americanism received general recognition during his entire senate career, but came in for special praise throughout the country during the last eight years of his life. In March, 1916, he was a guest of honor at a great Republican meeting in Massachusetts, where he was introduced as a "citizen who had no hyphen in his system." He denounced the McLemore resolution, which warned American ships to keep out of the danger zone and was held to be an abandonment of American rights on the sea. He upheld the Democratic administration in the months preceding America's entrance into the world struggle, when he deemed the nation's honor at stake.

"Those Minnesota congressmen who flutter around like a parcel of frightened hens whenever there is a question of real statesmanship before the country, should

watch Senator Nelson," affirmed the Democratic editor of "Wheelock's Weekly," Fergus Falls, in March, 1917.

When reports and rumors of the senator's intention to retire at the end of his fourth term spread over the state in the summer of 1917, there were general protests, not only among Republicans, but also among the Democrats. His attitude in the war had made him stronger than ever with the Anglo-Americans. Democratic leaders like Daniel W. Lawler called upon the senator to accept another term, and it became known that President Wilson had written a letter to Minnesota Democrats, requesting that no candidate be placed by his party in the field against him.

"I know Senator Nelson well," said the president, "and know that he would like to retire and spend his declining years in peace. But if Senator Nelson was sure that he had but one year more to live, he owes that year to the country. With his ability and his knowledge of international affairs, his services are invaluable to the nation at this time."

It was not until April 15, 1918, on the eve of the primary campaign, that the senator issued an announcement "to the people of Minnesota" that he had finally decided to accept another term. He had felt, he said, in view of his long service, that he ought not to seek a re-election and it had not been his purpose "heretofore to become a candidate. But ever since last November have come numerous and repeated requests by telegrams and letters and from all classes, urging me to stand for another term. These good people feel that my services are still needed in the senate, especially during the war, and many of them even intimated that it would be unpatriotic for me to quit at this time, and this intimation has affected me most of all. I was not a slacker in 1861 and I do not want to be a slacker in this greater war."

The last sentence made a profound impression upon the patriotic citizens of the state.

Senator Nelson remained in Washington during both the primary and the post-primary campaign, without

seeking in any manner to influence the result. In line with President Wilson's wishes, the Democratic party placed no candidate in the field against the senator, Daniel W. Lawler being particularly active in bringing this about. Mr. Nelson had one opponent, however, in the person of Willis G. Calderwood of Minneapolis, who filed as the candidate of the National party, with the backing of the radical forces. The senator's majority was 69,281 votes. That was a substantial majority, but not so large as the one he received six years before—102, 691 votes, which is the biggest majority Minnesota ever gave a candidate on the state ticket before women's suffrage went into effect.

Chapter XVII

SENATOR AND STATESMAN

It is not our intention, in this biography, to tell the complete story of Knute Nelson's services in the United States senate, but rather to call attention to his most important and most characteristic acts and utterances. A complete story would fill a large volume, and very few would read it, for it would be lacking in human and dramatic interest. And even if one wished to give a full account of the senator's services, it would be impossible to get at all the facts.

"The full extent of his service will never be known," says Governor Preus, who spent three years with Nelson as clerk and later kept in close touch with him. "Senator Nelson would gladly take the chairmanship of a subcommittee, do the work in preparing a bill and in holding hearings, and then give someone else the opportunity of having his name attached to the law. This was undoubtedly due to the fact that service to Nelson meant more than fame, but he was also shrewd enough to know that men, who have their names attached to important acts in congress, are frequently retired from public life by reason of such distinction. He was chairman of the judiciary committee of the senate when the Volstead law was passed. No man devoted himself more industriously to the passage of that law than Nelson, yet he told me once that he would not have his name attached to the statute."

Mr. Nelson carried his remarkable industry with him into the senate. He never loafed on the job. No man in the entire history of the senate worked harder or was more faithful in his attendance upon its proceedings. This may seem a sweeping statement, but is borne out by the testimony of all who are in a position to know. He appeared at his office in the senate building early in the morning and there he was usually found after the day's adjournment.

Investigations, the results of which are embodied in reports, play a very prominent part in legislation, but are unnoticed by the general public, because they are generally conducted quietly. The reports sometimes serve as the basis of legislation of far-reaching importance. It may not be too much to say that Senator Nelson was more active and did more hard work in connection with investigations and framing of reports and legislation arising from them, than any other senator who served with him. This statement is undoubtedly true with respect to Mr. Nelson's first three terms, when he was a veritable workhorse that never tired.

Senator Nelson spoke with disdain, in private, of certain senators who are in the habit of making lengthy speeches for public effect, or for public show, and then absenting themselves from the senate for weeks at a time, apparently indifferent as to what is going on. A great deal is said and written about "watch dogs of the treasury," but very little about watch dogs of legislation in general, both in committee and on the floor of congress. Faithful watchers are needed there, and Knute Nelson was one of these. For this he received but little public praise or notice.

A Many-Sided Legislator

Senator Nelson was a peculiarly efficient legislator. He had rare ability in blocking out a measure and couching its provisions in clear and correct legal phraseology; he had the ability to present the merits of a measure in a most convincing manner, both before a committee and before the senate; he knew how to pilot a measure through the various channels of legislation; he had a practical insight into the legislative needs of the country, and, as we have said, he was a tireless worker.

Nelson drew his own acts and they are so well drawn that courts and lawyers find but little in them to wrangle over. His experience as a political strategist in Minnesota was admirable training for the task of a legislative pilot and his wide experience in arguing cases before courts and juries, and in discussing political issues before

the people, had prepared him for the work of presenting the merits of bills before his colleagues. While Nelson did not profess nor claim greatness as a statesman, and while it is true that he did not originate or formulate any great policies as a leader in congress, few men had such many-sided efficiency for legislative service.

An Authority on Land Laws

As a rule, the senators who receive the widest recognition are those concerned with international affairs, with the tariff and finance. During the past ten years, especially, the chairmanship of the senate committee on foreign relations has carried with it the gravest responsibilities and drawn to itself the greatest public attention. Nelson had no connection with the committee on foreign relations and never sought, nor won, recognition as an authority on international affairs, although, after he became a prominent member of the judiciary committee, the legal phases of international problems challenged his attention. For this reason, as President Wilson mentioned incidentally in his appeal for Nelson's re-election in 1918, the senator had a comprehensive knowledge of international law.

In the main, the subjects that occupied Senator Nelson's mind were internal affairs—the tariff, finance, the public domain, Indian affairs, agriculture, internal improvements, commerce, trusts, railroads, industry—and to these he gave the most careful study. Before 1910, he had come to be recognized as the best informed member of the entire congress on Indian affairs and public lands. Indeed, it may not be too much to say that on these subjects he was the best informed man in the United States. The article he wrote in 1909 on "Our Most Important Land Laws," published in "The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science," was accepted as authoritative by students of government. After a compact discussion of the land laws he took the position that "in view of the rapid increase of our population and in view of the rapidly diminishing area of our public domain, no agricultural land should

be disposed of except under the homestead law, without the 'commutation' privilege; that none of our remaining forest lands should be disposed of, but only the large and mature timber, and that our arid lands should be disposed of for agricultural purposes to actual settlers under the reclamation law."

"Whenever Senator Nelson made a statement to the senate affecting Indian affairs and public lands, or on any of those matters, which were in his charge," said Senator Paris Gibson, Montana, who was Nelson's colleague for several years, "the senate always accepted it as the fact, while in many other cases the senate always felt like checking up, so as to be sure that it was all right."

It is hard to imagine a finer tribute, revealing in striking fashion the confidence his colleagues reposed in Nelson's thoroughness, accuracy and honesty.

It was during Senator Nelson's handling of Indian affairs and public lands that he gave such valuable service to the settlers of the northwest. Contests over railroad lands and controversies over homesteads and preemptions were very common, and the senator did more, perhaps, to settle these troubles than any other member of congress. This arose from his sympathy with the homesteaders and his willingness to give helpful service. He had been a homesteader himself, had acted as attorney for scores of homesteaders, who had trouble in obtaining title to their lands, and he knew what it meant to be involved in such difficulties.

Nelson's First Speeches and Bills

When Nelson entered the senate in 1895 the country was in the midst of hard times, and the money question was uppermost in the minds of the people. As soon as he had rested after his struggle for Washburn's seat, he began a diligent study of financial problems with a view to doing effective work in the solution of these problems. Only a month after taking his seat, on December 31, 1895, he made his first senate speech, and it was on the subject of finance. It was a carefully prepared effort, read from manuscript. He maintained that the

outflow of gold could not be stopped until the balance of trade was in our favor and that this result could not be obtained without an adequate increase in the tariff rates. Such an increase and an adequate reserve in the treasury would solve the problem. He contended that the banks ought to bear their share of the burdens of maintaining our vast paper currency on a parity with gold. He did not advocate the retirement of the greenbacks, but declared in favor of a sound monetary system.

Within two weeks he followed this speech with his first senate bill, which sought to put into legislation a part of the ideas he had advocated. Its purpose was to widen the scope of national banks and at the same time compel them to share with the treasury the burden of supporting the gold reserve. It gave the banks a few minor concessions, which would have a tendency to increase the volume of the currency and at the same time increase the burden of their responsibilities to the government and to the people. The bill allowed the organization of national banks in the smaller communities, in that it reduced the minimum capital from $50,000 to $25,000. With modifications, this bill was enacted into law and is still in force. Its importance has been far-reaching, having resulted in the establishment of numerous national banks in communities that would otherwise have been without such institutions.

On January 27, for the second time within a few weeks after taking his seat, Senator Nelson addressed the "greatest law-making body in the world." This speech, too, dealt with finance, being an argument against the independent free silver amendment to the bond bill.

"He is taking a commanding position among new senators and in my opinion is the most influential of the new members," wrote Congressman Frank M. Eddy to one of the papers in his district.

The comments in the state press on Nelson's first bill and on his first two speeches were very favorable. Among the most commendatory expressions were some in the editorial columns of the Minneapolis Tribune.

This was significant in view of the recent Washburn-Nelson engagement.

"In my long experience in the senate, I recall no man who has been more successful in securing legislation of great importance, not only for his state, but for the nation. Your record during your first term in the senate is phenomenal in this regard. You have borne yourself in your high office in such a manner that no words of commendation, however strong, would be extravagant."

That was the view of Mr. Nelson's first few years in the senate entertained by E. V. Murphy, for many years chief stenographic reporter in the senate. It was expressed in a personal letter to Nelson, in June, 1900, after the senator's nomination for a second term by the Republican state convention.

Served With Former Teacher

One of the outstanding figures in the United States senate, when Nelson took his seat in that body, was William F. Vilas, Wisconsin, in whose office the Minnesota senator studied law thirty years before. It is a very interesting circumstance that one of the most vigorous of Nelson's speeches in the senate was in opposition to a proposal of his former teacher to increase the number of cadets at West Point. It was in this connection that the former private and corporal of the Fourth Wisconsin delivered his fine eulogy of the common soldier. He took the position that meritorious non-commissioned officers were not given proper opportunity for advancement in the service.

"While our government," said he, "is in many respects the freest and best on the face of the earth, yet, if we look at our army and our military system, it is the most aristocratic and the most exclusive in the world. There is perhaps no country where, in time of peace, or, indeed, in time of war, it is more difficult to rise from the ranks to that of a commissioned officer than it is in the army of the United States.

"It was my lot to serve during the war of the rebellion

as a private and non-commissioned officer. I marched and counter-marched with my knapsack and musket. I rode in the cavalry and charged and counter-charged, guarded the rear and rode in front as corporal and enlisted man, and my sympathy always extends to the men in the ranks. I have time and again seen examples of the spirit that is manifested by some of the people from West Point.

"I should be in favor of increasing the force of cadets . . . . but, in heaven's name, let us take them from the ranks. Let us give the American soldier, the private and the non-commissioned officer, an opportunity to rise in the ranks and become an officer. In that way we can get a better class of privates, as better men will enlist. . . .

"We all know how many of the men in the ranks (during the Civil war) were the equals in character and standing and ability of the men who commanded them. We know, too, how these men, with the spirit of patriotism which was so magnificent in the bosom of the American people, coming from the vocations of civil life, not only wore the garb of the common soldier, but did that which was more humiliating than anything else, yielded the most abject obedience to their superiors; yes, the superiors who, at home, were their inferiors."

This was an extemporaneous outburst and is a good illustration of Nelson's blunt, vigorous style, when aroused by something that touched him to the quick. It was a frank, courageous utterance, characteristic of his speeches in the senate and revealing his democratic tendencies.

The Famous Bankruptcy Act

It was during these first years that Nelson obtained the enactment of his famous bankruptcy act. This act, introduced in 1897 and passed in 1898, is, perhaps, the most important piece of legislation that Senator Nelson originated during his entire career. It is generally conceded to be best and fairest of the four bankruptcy laws that have been placed on the statute books of the United

States. Some years after its enactment he was instrumental in so amending it as to make it more difficult for dishonest bankrupts to obtain their discharge. The popular name for this law is the "Nelson cure" and has made the senator's name familiar to millions of Americans, who take but very little interest in politics or national legislation. He fought vigorously and stubbornly for its enactment against determined opposition and, having got it on the statute books, was equally stubborn in fighting to keep it there.

Senator Nelson had a two-fold purpose in placing this law upon the statute books—to help those who have been unfortunate in business and to contribute toward the restoration of prosperity. And there was special need of such an act in 1897. The hard times had caused the downfall of thousands of firms and individuals engaged in business. They were powerless to extricate themselves from their difficulties—powerless to contribute anything toward the progress of their community. By his bankruptcy law, Nelson gave them a chance to obtain their freedom and to make a fresh start, unhampered by their past mistakes and by misfortune, for which, perhaps, they were in no wise to blame. He delivered several speeches in behalf of his bill and fought in true Viking fashion to bring it to a final vote in the two branches of congress. His ability to overcome a hostile majority in the senate committee, which had it in charge, was regarded as a distinct achievement. It attracted the attention of political observers, not in Washington alone, but in the country at large, especially in the home state.

Nelson's speech of April 8, 1897, in which he attacked the Torrey bankruptcy bill as being too drastic, and upholds his own, is a masterly argument, worthy of the best senate traditions. Like all of Nelson's deliberate speeches, it is instructive, cogent in reasoning, vigorous in language, powerful in logic. At the outset he reviewed past bankruptcy legislation, pointing out the weak points in the various acts; next, he gave the origin of the Torrey bill and condemned it as a drastic measure, framed principally for the benefit of creditors and needlessly

harsh to the debtor; then followed a statement of the legitimate purpose of a bankruptcy law and a strong argument for his own measure.

A bankruptcy law, Mr. President, may serve two purposes, [declared the senator.] First, it may be a mere machine or a mere system for the collection of debts. This is the kind of law that creditors chiefly have in view. Secondly, it may be an absolvent, an acquittance for those debtors who are hopelessly insolvent and who still have the vigor and the spirit to take a fresh start and to become active and useful members of society, if relieved from the incubus, the dead-weight of their debts. Creditors have other means besides a bankruptcy law for their relief; not so the hopelessly insolvent debtor. Without a bankruptcy law he is doomed forevermore.

The men who have been the most active and efficient in society, the men who carry on active business and give laboring men something to do, are not like the men who loan out money on mortgages, on bonds, or other securities and live by clipping coupons. The latter take no risk, and therefore hardly ever fail in business, but the former take the risk, and hence often fail. The latter are not the men who cause the country to prosper, or create wealth, or make business. The men who create wealth and produce prosperity are the men who take their own means, not only what they themselves have, but what they can borrow, and put into active employment, active use, and furnish labor for other men. . . .

The need of the hour in the midst of these hard times is not a more drastic, a more severe, a more harsh collecting system. We do not need any additional appliances for collecting debts. What we need is to relieve those who are unfortunate and in a helpless condition, and say to them, in the language of the gospel. "Take up thy bed and walk."

After prosperity has returned, said the senator, at the close of his argument, a more stringent act may be placed on the statute books. "Let us be content for the present to absolve and to grant full absolution to the struggling, debt-laden, but ambitious debtor, and thus again muster him into the line of battle for an advance on industrial lines."

Thus we see that Senator Nelson, in the fight for his famous act, was guided by the worthiest of motives and based his arguments on humanitarian grounds, as well as sound economic considerations.

Senator Nelson was the author of this law, in fact, as well as in name. He drew it; he was its chief sponsor

on the floor of the senate, and he was the chief strategist in waging the successful campaign for its passage through both branches of congress.

Financial Legislation

Senator Nelson's first senate bill, already referred to, was by no means the only measure he introduced involving national banks and finance.

In 1908, he obtained the adoption of an amendment to the national bank law requiring national banks to pay interest on government deposits in certain cases. Before that time they had not been obliged to pay any interest on such moneys and they were not at all pleased over the change.

During the same year, he prepared and sponsored another amendment to the national bank law which, while it was not adopted, is very interesting in the light of subsequent history. It was a proposition to create a special fund, termed a "depositors' fund," from which depositors in an insolvent national bank were to be reimbursed for losses sustained. This was nothing more or less than a federal bank guarantee law, and in view of later events might be regarded as "radical" or "socialistic." That a man denounced by radicals as a conservative of conservatives, or "reactionary," should have introduced such a measure illustrates how little is really known of the character and the acts of certain statesmen.

Here is the senator's amendment:

That one-third of all taxes to be paid by national banking associations upon the average amount of their notes in circulation, pursuant to the provisions of section 4 of this act, including the taxes payable in the month of January, A. D. 1908, shall be, and hereby is set apart in the treasury of the United States as a permanent special fund termed "Depositors' Fund," to be used and expended in paying all depositors, except the United States, the amount of their deposits in any such association that has become insolvent and a receiver has been appointed therefor by the comptroller of the currency, the secretary of the treasury shall, as soon as practicable, under such rules and regulations as he may prescribe, pay all depositors of such association, except the United States, the amount of their then subsisting deposits out of and from the said special fund, and after making such payment the United States shall, as to such deposits, be sub-

rogated to all the rights and remedies of the depositors, and shall be entitled to recover and receive from the assets of such association all dividends and the sum which the depositors would be entitled to if not paid from said special fund as aforesaid, and the amount so recovered shall be placed to the credit of a part of the said special fund. Said special depositors' fund shall not be allowed to exceed the sum of $10,000,000 and all sums in excess of that amount shall be covered into the funds of the treasury.

Of course, this amendment was not adopted, but it attracted much attention and, according to the Alexandria Post News of February 6, 1908, "No amendment proposed to the banking laws has been more favorably received."

Later in the same session of congress, Nelson was one of the leaders in the fight against the Aldrich currency bill, fathered by Senator Aldrich, Rhode Island, for many years the acknowledged leader of the conservative Republicans of congress and generally regarded in the country at large as the most powerful champion of the "vested interests" in Washington.

The provision in the national bank law authorizing national banks to loan money on farm mortgages, was Nelson's work. He introduced his first bill to bring this about in 1903, but failed. With his usual tenacity of purpose, he kept up the fight and finally, in the session of 1913, succeeded in tacking an amendment to the administration's currency bill embodying the idea. Nelson fought for this so persistently because he thought it would prove of real benefit to the farmers as well as the national banks.

The senator delivered a number of speeches in the senate, during the nineties, on the silver question. The arguments he advanced were along the lines of his Argyle speech of 1894, which has already been discussed and quoted from. He was a "sound money" man during the entire free silver controversy. He supported the gold standard act of 1900, which definitely established the gold dollar as the standard of value in the United States and enjoined upon the secretary of the treasury the duty of maintaining all other forms of money at a parity with that standard. This amounted

to an official repudiation of free silver and was received with satisfaction by the conservative business interests, and settled, for this country at least, the vexing problem of the mutual relations of silver and gold. The question has never since been of any consequence as a political issue.

Commerce and Labor Act

Another important act, drawn, introduced, sponsored and piloted through congress by Senator Nelson, is the law creating the department of commerce and labor. The new department included the bureau of corporations, the census bureau, the bureau of statistics and various departments which were not properly co-ordinated, and involved considerable duplication of work. Through the creation of this department, the interests of labor were brought side by side with the interests of capital, and the work of caring for the great and rapidly growing commerce of the country was brought under one head. It tended to bring to the business of America new markets and new fields of trade and to prevent discrimination against American products and, in general, assist in the expansion of the nation's trade.

This law was enacted in 1902, during the presidency of Theodore Roosevelt, with whom Senator Nelson frequently consulted as to the creation of the new department, especially with regard to the provision creating the bureau of corporations. President Roosevelt was quite enthusiastic over the establishment of the department of commerce and labor and the reorganization and rearrangement of boards and bureaus which it effected.

For Stronger Interstate Commerce Law

Senator Nelson also co-operated with President Roosevelt in obtaining the passage of the interstate commerce law of 1906. He was not the author of this act, but was responsible for some of its provisions, and was one of its most active, most influential sponsors. The law of 1906 gave the interstate commerce commission, for

the first time, the rate-making power, which it had for years been seeking to obtain, and which it needed to function properly.

In 1910 the interstate commerce act was further amended and an attempt was made to write into it two sections which gave the railroads immunity from the provisions of the anti-trust laws. These sections were vigorously opposed by Senator Nelson and, largely through his influence, were eliminated from the act. One of them was stricken out on his motion and the other on the motion of Senator Clay, Georgia, a Democrat, in order to divide the honors between the two political parties. By the amendment of 1910 the interstate commerce commission was given the power to pass upon new railway rates before they could go into effect, and to veto them, if found unreasonable or excessive—a power not conferred by the act of 1906.

"The question whether a given rate (railway rate) is reasonable and fairly remunerative is a question of fact, a business proposition, and not a question of law," was the senator's contention. He vigorously advocated the giving of the rate-making power to the interstate commerce commission, just as it had been given by some of the legislatures of the states to their state commissions. He referred to the experience of Minnesota along this line.

"Unless we act judiciously and carefully," he affirmed in a speech on April 11, 1910, "unless we do what we can to protect the people of this country against the aggressions of trusts and monopolies, unless we put up the legislative shield as far as it is possible in our power to do, the trusts will, by and by, become as dangerous and as fatal to the life of the country as was the land system in France prior to the great revolution."

Strong language, that, for a steady-going Republican, but he went even farther, predicting a revolution in America, "if we are no wiser than the French were in the days of Louis XV and Louis XVI and allow trusts and monopolies to grow and go on untrammeled."

Alaska Legislation

As a result of Senator Nelson's visit to Alaska in 1903, he introduced and secured the passage of a number of bills which have been of much benefit to that northern territory. Among these may be mentioned the law providing for the construction of roads and trails, for the establishment of schools and the care of insane, the law providing for the creation of municipal corporations, the law permitting the formation of private business corporations, the law for the allotment of land to the natives, the law providing for a lighthouse at Cape Hinchinbrook, and judicial divisions.

He was also instrumental in obtaining the enactment of the law giving Alaska a delegate in congress and the law making it an organized territory with a territorial legislature.

Senator Nelson's interest in Alaska was almost like that of a guardian or father, and the people of the territory, a large portion of whom are Scandinavians, looked to him as their special friend and spokesman. It was to him, first of all, they turned when they wanted something from congress.

Nelson's Part in Anti-Trust Legislation

The anti-trust law, fathered by Senator John Sherman, was enacted in 1890, but for a number of years little attention was paid to it, either by the corporations affected by its provisions or by the officials of the federal government charged with its enforcement. As a result, trusts and monopolies multiplied in numbers and flourished. These vast combinations grew so insolent that recourse was had to the courts to curb and suppress them. "Trust-busting" became a favorite pastime and the voice of the anti-trust orator was heard in the land.

Contrary to the belief of the trusts, themselves, the law had teeth, and soon complaints were heard from them and their friends that it was almost impossible to do business under its provisions, and efforts were made to weaken and emasculate the Sherman act. In 1908,

in particular, a determined attack on the law was launched. Bills were introduced in both branches of congress. The most important and most far-reaching in its provisions was Senate Bill 6440, prepared, it is said, by an eminent New York lawyer, one of the attorneys for the Steel Trust. It was referred to a sub-committee of the judiciary committee of which Senator Nelson was chairman. Extensive hearings were held by this sub-committee, and eminent economists, like Seth Low, Professor Jenks and Herbert Knox Smith, chief of the bureau of corporations, urged the adoption of the bill.

This bill divided the corporations, from which trusts and combinations are formed, into two classes, those which were under the jurisdiction of the interstate commerce commission, like the railroad corporations, and those which were to be placed under the jurisdiction of the bureau of corporations. If these two bureaus found, after investigation, that certain trusts were reasonable, good trusts, then these were to be immune from prosecution. Of course, this was a scheme to give all a clean bill of health, and would have made the anti-trust law entirely harmless. All that any trust would need to do was to set up the defense of being reasonable, a good trust, innocent and well behaved.

Senator Nelson prepared an exhaustive report on this interesting bill (No. 848, sixtieth congress, second session), and recommended its indefinite postponement. The report was adopted, thus killing the bill. For years that report was a standing menace to other pro-trust legislation, and in the famous Standard Oil case, Justice Harlan, in his dissenting opinion, quoted extracts from it with approving comments, while Chief Justice White in his opinion was careful to use the words, "rule of reason," instead of the term, "reasonable."

Nelson's interest in curbing the trusts and preventing monopolies is shown by an amendment to the Dingley tariff bill, which he introduced in April, 1897. This amendment was so admirably drawn, so clear in language and meaning and so downright sensible and practical, at

least in the eyes of common, every-day people, that it is inserted here in its entirety:

"Whenever it shall appear to the satisfaction of the president of the United States, after due investigation, upon complaint of any person, that a contract, understanding, combination in form of a trust or otherwise, as a conspiracy, exists among the producers or manufacturers of any product or commodity, to restrain, stifle or monopolize the manufacture, production or sale, or to enhance the price of such product or commodity, then he shall have the power, at his discretion, to suspend by executive order the collection of all duties levied under this act upon any product or commodity imported, which is substantially or like in material, quality, texture or the use to which it may be applied to the product or commodity in respect to which the contract, understanding, combination or conspiracy aforesaid may exist, and during such suspension the products or the commodities upon which the duties levied are suspended as aforesaid shall be admitted free of duty. Whenever the president becomes satisfied that the cause, for which the suspension was ordered, has ceased to exist, it shall be his duty to revoke the order of suspension and thereupon duties shall thereafter be levied or collected as though said order had never been made."

What could be more just and practical? If the tariff does not promote the formation of trusts the power thus lodged in the president could do no harm, while if trusts result from their immunity from foreign competition, this amendment would have avoided the danger and protected the American consumers against extortion. Any objection to it would seem to be captious or springing from fear that it would really accomplish the purpose intended.

President McKinley, however, requested Senator Nelson to withdraw the amendment, as he thought its provisions placed upon him a responsibility he did not wish to assume. So it was withdrawn. Later it was taken up again by Senator Nelson and redrawn by a committee of senators, including Nelson and Cushman K. Davis,

but nothing came of it. Not a few Minnesota papers and some outside the state approved the amendment with enthusiasm and it is regrettable that it was not given a trial.

And yet, in spite of Senator Nelson's admirable record with respect to anti-trust legislation, there are thousands of well meaning, but ill-informed people, who, misled by demagogues, believed him to be the special friend of "big business."

For Popular Election of Senators and Income Tax

During the Washburn-Nelson campaign the senator declared emphatically in favor of the popular election of United States senators, and William Jennings Bryan, in an address at Alexandria some years afterward, congratulated the people of Mr. Nelson's home state and community upon their senator's strong support of this change in the federal constitution. Nelson, however, opposed the rider urged by southern Democrats which sought to divest the federal government of all regulative control in respect to the election of senators.

Senator Nelson believed in a federal income tax and was active in securing the passage of a constitutional amendment authorizing congress to impose such a tax. As will be remembered, the supreme court of the United States held a federal income tax in conflict with the constitution, making it necessary to amend the constitution. Nelson was instrumental in writing after the word "income," the words, "from whatever source derived," so as to prevent the supreme court in the future from making any point as to the character of the income, which it had done in its decision of 1894.

Local and Other Legislation

Senator Nelson showed his interest in conservation and reclamation by his act of 1904 allowing the state of Minnesota to select and acquire not to exceed 20,000 acres of public land for forestry purposes. This was done at the suggestion of General C. C. Andrews, state

forester of Minnesota. All of the lands were selected prior to 1912.

Another local bill, introduced and put through congress by the senator, was one granting to the state of Minnesota lands for a state sanitarium site near Leach Lake. He was instrumental in passing various bills appropriating money for public buildings in his state; also money for improving the harbors at Duluth, Two Harbors, Grand Marais, Zipple Bay and Warroad; also for the improvement of the Mississippi river and the Red River of the North, and for rebuilding the reservoirs of the upper Mississippi. The appropriation for the high dam between the cities of Minneapolis and St. Paul was his work.

Few senators put through more bills allowing pensions to old soldiers, as his sympathy with his comrades of the Civil war strengthened with the years.

In 1898, Mr. Nelson was appointed chairman of a senate committee to investigate the possibilities of providing protection against floods along the lower Mississippi and traveled with his committee all the way from the headwaters of the Father of Waters to the delta. A great deal of valuable information was gathered, which was put into a report, submitted to and approved by the committee on commerce, and has been used ever since as a source of authoritative information in Mississippi river legislation.

Senator Nelson took a lively interest in pure food and meat inspection legislation, and was one of the most active in putting through congress other progressive laws in the interest of the people, urged by President Roosevelt.

Although it has been customary for labor leaders to regard Mr. Nelson as "no friend of labor," he stood for much legislation that has been very beneficial to labor.

As a member of the judiciary committee, Senator Nelson prepared and obtained the passage of a bill giving the federal government the right of appeal in criminal cases, a right which the government did not before pos-

sess, and which exists in but few states. This right does not prevail in Minnesota. A large number of cases have been appealed, under this act, to the supreme court of the United States, about two-thirds of them having been reversed, demonstrating the necessity for the law.

Senator Nelson obtained the adoption of an amendment to the agricultural appropriation bill, increasing the annual allowance to agricultural colleges from $25,000 to $50,000. The senator's interest in agricultural institutions, which he expressed in his biennial message to the Minnesota legislature as governor, continued to the end of his life.

To Senator Nelson belongs the credit of first proposing that the territory of Oklahoma and Indian Territory be combined and admitted as the state of Oklahoma. He delivered a strong speech in support of this proposition.

The senator was largely instrumental in obtaining legislation for the reorganization of the revenue cutter service, placing it on a more efficient basis. He also introduced and obtained the passage of a bill relieving sailors in the merchant marine from imprisonment—an act of justice, too long delayed.

Attitude on Prohibition

What has been said about Senator Nelson's conservative attitude on most questions—the avoiding of extremes—applies to his course with respect to prohibition and other legislation in the interest of temperance. In the Koshkonong settlement, where he grew to manhood, drinking was very common. Every hamlet and village had its saloons, run wide open. There was excessive drinking, and if there were any total abstainers, they were extremely scarce. Knute Nelson was not a total abstainer, but was always temperate in his personal habits.

Prohibition was not an issue either in the Wisconsin legislature, when he was a Wisconsin assemblyman, or in the Minnesota legislature, when he was a state senator, nor was there any particular agitation for a dry

nation while he served in the national house; but during his service in the United States senate, curtailment of the liquor traffic and later, absolute prohibition, became a living issue.

"I am of the opinion that congress has the power so to regulate interstate commerce, in the liquor traffic, that the police power of the state can become wholly effective," declared Nelson in the senate in April, 1908, "and that if congress, in its wisdom, sees fit to so regulate the liquor traffic, that liquor, coming into a prohibition state, shall, from the moment of its arrival within the state and before delivery to the consignee, be subject to the laws of the state, it has the constitutional power to enact such legislation and would not thereby deprive any citizen of the United States of any of his constitutional rights."

Senator Nelson made this statement in connection with his minority report as a member of the judiciary committee, upholding the constitutionality of bills to regulate interstate commerce in intoxicating liquors and prohibiting the shipping of liquor into prohibition states.

As he advanced in years, Senator Nelson turned against the liquor evil more and more. He voted for the submission of the eighteenth amendment; he was active and influential in framing and enacting the Volstead law, vigorously opposing all efforts to weaken or emasculate it.

"Mr. President," said he in a stirring speech in the senate, August 23, 1921, "we have exterminated the beer saloons and the whisky saloons and, so help me God, they will stay exterminated; and no friend of the bootleggers, no cunning move to undermine the prohibition law, will prevail. The American people, the American women, at all events, understand what is involved in this question."

The Famous Ballinger-Pinchot Controversy

Principally because of the heated controversy that broke over Nelson's course as chairman of the congressional committee, which investigated Richard A. Bal-

linger's record as head of the interior department, the opinion became prevalent that the senator was an enemy of conservation.

As will be remembered, a fierce controversy raged between Gifford Pinchot, head of the forestry bureau, and Secretary Ballinger, over the conservation question, as a result of which Pinchot was forced out of office and Mr. Ballinger's conduct of the interior department was severely censured, leading to an investigation by a special congressional committee. A majority of this committee was made up of Republicans, but the Democratic minority included some vigorous fighters, like Representaive James, Kentucky, and Representative Graham, Illinois, and some very sharp encounters took place during the sessions and public hearings.

Senator Nelson was appointed chairman of the committee and on more than one occasion had a difficult time in keeping his strong Viking temper under control. Indeed, he didn't keep it under control at times.

Louis D. Brandeis, now associate justice of the United States supreme court, then a prominent lawyer of Boston, represented Pinchot and the radical conservationists at the hearings. Brandeis was regarded as a man of radical tendencies in politics, and his tongue had a peculiarly sarcastic twist when he went after men and things he didn't like. He didn't like some of the witnesses, who testified at the hearings, nor did he like Senator Nelson's conduct of the hearings as chairman. So he goaded the senator until the Viking felt like doing to him what he did to Tobias Sauby up at Elbow Lake.

The hearings dragged, became tiresome to all concerned, and finally came to an abrupt end, September 7, 1910. That was at the West hotel, Minneapolis, the hearings having been transferred from Washington to the Minnesota metropolis during the summer. Owing to the absence of some of the Republican members of the committee, the Democrats formed a majority of those present. The Democrats, along with Representative Madden, Kansas, a Republican insurgent, were hos-

tile to Ballinger and wanted to censure him in the committee's report. That was partly because they believed he deserved it and partly because it would embarrass the Republican party in the pending election, Ballinger being a prominent member of the Republican administration.

They insisted on bringing the hearings to an end and framing a report. To this Nelson and the Republican members refused to accede. Instead, they proposed to adjourn the hearings for a few days and resume them in Chicago after Senator Root and other absentees had put in their appearance. The members present in Minneapolis were Senators Nelson, Sutherland, Fletcher and Purcell, and Representatives James, Graham, Madden and McCall. At the final session, Sutherland and McCall, both Republicans, walked out to break the quorum and prevent the adoption of an anti-Ballinger report, which the Democrats had all framed for the purpose. Without a quorum, the committee broke up. Nelson went away, sending word to his Democratic colleagues that there would be no further meetings until later in Chicago.

Of course, the Democrats were indignant. They gave their report to the press for publication and vowed they would participate in no further proceedings of the committee. Nor were the hearings resumed and nothing came of the investigation. Senator Nelson's conduct at Minneapolis was denounced by the anti-Ballinger faction, and the impression prevailed that he was an enemy of conservation. That, however, was not true. Whatever may be said of his conduct of the investigation, and particularly of his actions at the final session, he was not an enemy of conservation. He was a believer in conservation, but not an extremist—which is true of his attitude on almost every question; he generally pursued a middle course. He believed in conserving our natural resources, but not in retarding the legitimate development of the newer sections of the country.

Nelson's Views on Conservation

He stated his views very frankly and clearly in the debate on the conservation issue in the senate, in June, 1910, when he said:

> I believe in reasonable and just conservation—in such a gospel—but there is a conservation that ties up our public lands and natural resources; there is a conservation which debars the public from the use of these resources and lands; and such conservation I regard as fatal and dangerous to the welfare of the public. There is another conservation, of which I am in favor, and that is that conservation which believes in utilizing our public resources in our day and generation—whether land, timber, waterpower, or minerals—to a reasonable degree and preventing their passing into the hands of monopolies, and regulating, so far as we can by legislation, the conditions under which the public is to enjoy the benefit of them. To my mind, that gospel that would tie up our public resources, merely to put them in storage, and prevent this generation from utilizing them, is a most dangerous and pernicious gospel. To my mind, the safe way and the judicious way is to utilize our natural resources in such a way that the present generation may derive some benefit from them.

In reference to Alaska, where the coal lands already had been withdrawn, Senator Nelson urged that, first of all, the coal and agricultural lands should be surveyed, and then a fair and workable coal-land law enacted, permitting people to secure coal at a fair price and in such quantities as to make development possible. He could see no good in compelling the people of Alaska to ship in coal from the states when there was coal to be had in the territory.

Needless to say, this attitude did not satisfy the extreme conservationists, but was sound and sensible and was what the people of Alaska demanded.

His conservation views are further revealed in a bill he introduced, in January, 1907, which prohibited the further sale to individuals or corporations of public lands containing deposits of coal, lignite, asphalt, petroleum or natural gas. Such lands were to remain the property of the government until the deposits were exhausted. Permits, not to run over a year, might be granted for exploration purposes and lands might be leased. No party holding a lease, however, could enter into any trust or combination.

So-called "progressive" journals and periodicals, east and west, commented very favorably on this bill.

During the administration of President Taft, he introduced and reported for passage a bill which was finally incorporated in the act permitting the loan of government funds for reclamation purposes, authorizing the president, in his discretion, to withdraw public lands for conservation purposes. Later, at the 1909-10 session of congress, he induced the senate to adopt an amendment to the Alaska fur seal bill providing for a closed season of ten years, which was finally reduced to five years in the conference committee. This legislation was most urgently needed, as there was danger of the destruction of the entire seal herd.

Attitude on Labor

As we have seen, Nelson was absolutely against trusts and combinations that sought to dominate the business world, and he was equally opposed to any attempt on the part of organized labor to dominate the affairs of men, industrially and politically. He recognized the right of labor to strike, if the strikers kept within legal limitations, but no public man ever minced matters less in denouncing lawlessness in conflicts between capital and labor. He was entirely free from demagoguery and only once in his public speeches used that favorite phrase, "the toiling masses," in his speech on tariff reform, in the national house, March 29, 1888.

"Nothing so retards industrial revival in this country today as the attitude of organized labor in refusing to come down to reasonable wages and a reasonable basis of employment," he declared in the senate on October 1, 1921. "We cannot tolerate in this country a government or a rule stronger than the people of the United States. We cannot afford to have any people take our country by the throat and say 'you must do as we want or we will destroy everything in this country. We will hold up the entire transportation system of the country and deprive the cities and the towns of their fuel, their food supply, and everything else, unless you do as we

want.' It is time, Mr. President, that we taught these men the lesson that they are not bigger than the government of the United States."

In spite of determined efforts in recent years to ally the farmers and organized labor in a new party, the farmers of America today look askance at some of the demands of labor leaders in state and national legislation—limitations as to hours, for instance—and Senator Nelson, typical farmer as he was, had the farmer's point of view in his attitude on the industrial situation.

Favored Expansion and War With Spain

In the closing years of the nineteenth century the United States abandoned her old policy of isolation and enrolled herself as a world power, with world-wide responsibilities and obligations. While the war with Spain was still raging, congress adopted a joint resolution annexing the Hawaiian Islands. For this resolution Senator Nelson voted. Then came the Treaty of Paris, by which the United States took over the Philippines and Porto Rico. The head of the American peace commission that negotiated this treaty was Senator Cushman K. Davis, Minnesota, and when the senate acted upon this treaty, Nelson stood shoulder to shoulder with his distinguished Minnesota colleague in championing its ratification; ever after he frowned upon all talk and moves to surrender these islands.

On January 20, 1899, in his speech in the senate in favor of the confirmation of the Treaty of Paris and the retention of the Philippines, Senator Nelson entered upon a rather extended constitutional argument in support of the right of the United States to acquire and govern foreign territory—a right doubted, if not denied, by leading Democratic senators and some of the Republicans. He was frequently interrupted by Senators Hoar, Mason, Tillman and others, but parried their questions with a great deal of spirit and skill.

"We are here to give them (the Philippines) a just, free and good government and to keep them out of the

clutches of the great powers of the earth," exclaimed the Viking senator, in response to a sneering remark of Senator Mason's that the United States government was about to enslave the people of the Islands. "It is our duty to thus protect them and it would be the highest cruelty for us to leave them to the mercy of any who might choose to attack them."

He maintained that prophecies just as gloomy as those uttered by some of his colleagues were made with reference to the Louisiana Purchase. It was a great privilege, in his opinion, to be able to give the Filipinos a good government and the United States was equal to the emergency. "We come as ministering angels, not as despots," he asserted. As was to be expected, Nelson was branded as an "imperialist" and "jingoist" by the opponents of annexation.

He was heartily in favor of the war against Spain. He condemned in the strongest language the ruthlessness of the Spanish government in Cuba and demanded the recognition of the Cuban insurgents by the government of the United States months before the sinking of the Maine in Havana harbor. In April, shortly before the sinking of the Maine, he was one of eleven Republican senators who voted for the recognition of the insurgents against the wishes and the advice of President McKinley. For this he was both praised and blamed. Some declared that he had "cut loose from the Republican party and its head," but Nelson's friends countered by saying that McKinley was not the entire Republican party and that, as a matter of fact, a majority of the Republicans approved the senator's stand and admired his independence. The developments that soon followed removed all doubts as to the popular approval of Nelson's position. The sinking of the Maine alone was sufficient for that.

"To ignore Gomez and the Cuban republic seems to me to be cold, icy heartlessness, unworthy of a great nation and a great people," was his view of the matter, as expressed in his speech of April 11, 1898. In the

fall of the same year, while addressing a Minnesota audience, he said:

"It was upon the broad grounds of humanity and for the relief of the oppressed, and not upon mercenary or commercial grounds, that we intervened, and our intervention must be as broad and as generous as the grounds upon which we intervened. . . . We owe the people we saved a good government in some form. . . . Neither the cry of 'jingoism' nor the cry of 'imperialism' will chill the ardor or dull the conscience of the American people."

He did not, however, overlook the commercial advantages, which he believed would come with our holdings, and in a speech at Alexandria, September 1, 1900, in reviewing the Philippine insurrection and the work of the United States in Cuba, he declared:

"With peace and good government, Manila and the Philippine Islands will become the great commercial center of the far east, and afford us a great field for American enterprises and trade, such as we have never had before and such as no other nation can boast of. From this vantage ground we can dominate the commerce and by our presence be instrumental in maintaining the peace of the east at less outlay and less exertion than any other nation."

In a speech in the Senate, February 20, 1902, Nelson returned to the question of the Philippines, saying: "I do not think we want to assume guardianship as protectors in the distant Orient, 8,000 miles from our shores, of the densest beehive of humanity on the face of the habitable globe, but if we are to keep an army and navy there, if we are to have fortifications there, if we are to maintain a naval station there, if we are to protect anybody in that country, let it be under our flag, under our dominion, where we can exercise, not the care of a policeman, but the care of a good father."

Fourteen years later he was still the same enthusiastic champion of America's retention of the Philippines. In

a speech in the senate, January 14, 1916, he exclaimed: "Let us never scuttle the ship! The American flag was hoisted over the bay of Manila, on Corregidor island, at its entrance. Let no American be foolish enough or base enough, for political reasons or any other, to tear down that flag."

Favored Allies in the World War

There never was any doubt as to where Senator Nelson stood on the World war. He was opposed to any wavering on the part of America in asserting her rights in the war zone before we became involved in the great conflict. On that account, he denounced the McLemore resolution as weak and cowardly, voting against it, even though Senator Clapp and all of the ten Minnesota congressmen lined up for it on the roll call.

His sympathies were against Germany from the very start. Like Roosevelt, he believed that President Wilson did wrong in not warning the war lords to keep out of Belgium, and he believed that Germany was responsible for the war.

In a speech August 24, 1918, he declared that "as soon as the great war broke out in Europe it was evident to me that it would ultimately be our war as much as the war of those countries in Europe. It was evident to me that if Germany should succeed in vanquishing France and England and obtaining complete control of the continent in Europe, there would be no place in the sun for America; that we would be the next victim of German aggression. So, from the very beginning, my heart has been in favor of this war."

Of course, he voted for the war declaration, and after we were in the war, none of the senators were for a more aggressive prosecution of the war than he; none backed up the president more loyally, even though he realized that many things were being done by the administration which were open to question. It was not until after the war was over that he turned critic.

Supported League of Nations

In line with his belief expressed over twenty years before in connection with the acquisition of the Philippine islands and other insular possessions—that America should abandon her policy of isolation and enroll herself as a world power—Senator Nelson took the position that the United States should ratify the treaty of Versailles with slight reservations and enter the League of Nations.

He believed that unless a strong league of nations was formed, with a tribunal to hear and pass upon international disputes and with power to enforce its decrees, the World war had, in a measure, been fought in vain; and he felt that unless the United States entered that league, it would shirk its full duty as a great nation. He delivered a series of speeches in support of these views, the first on July 29, 1919, not long after President Wilson's return from Paris and his submission of the treaty to the senate. That speech was an exceedingly able effort—the declaration of a seasoned statesman, firm and positive in language, strong in its logic. It was one of Knute Nelson's best speeches and proves that his intellect had not lost its vigor.

> Our resources and our activities are so vast that they require a world for their necessary development and expansion, [he asserted.] We can no longer isolate ourselves in our relations with other countries. Their doors must be open to us, and our doors to them. Modern science has made distant nations our near neighbors. Chaos, stagnation, and distress in one part of the civilized world react upon and ultimately affect other parts of the world, including our own country.
>
> There is in these strenuous modern times a neighborhood of nations as well as a neighborhood of individuals. Nations can no longer with safety and impunity say, 'I am not my brother's keeper'. . . . We need Europe and Europe needs us. Free access to her markets is an absolute necessity of our industrial and economic life, and her capacity to absorb our products is contingent upon the degree of law and order that prevails within her borders. . . .

Proceeding, he discussed the reasons for America's entrance into the war and held that Washington and the other great men of his day, if "they had been with

us," would have approved of America's course in entering the struggle. And having gone in, there was a "most effective 'entangling alliance' between our soldiers and the soldiers of England and France that brought the enemy to his knees and forced him to seek an armistice and to sue for peace."

Then followed glowing words of praise for the American boys at the front, and this:

> It now remains for us to reap the full fruits of their victory. It has not only been our business to vanquish the enemy, but it is now our task to see that he stays vanquished and that he ceases to be a menace to the peace of the world. Unless this task is accomplished we shall have failed to score a complete victory. To undertake to secure the full fruits of our victory in Europe will involve a dangerous 'entangling alliance' to no greater extent than was involved in our participation in the war. . . .
>
> The entire world . . . . is vitally interested in preventing the recurrence of such a war as ended in November last or of any war akin to it. Our country has scored a great victory in war; it now remains to score a great victory of peace. Nearly three centuries ago the great English poet, Milton, declared:
>
> "Peace hath her victories
> No less renowned than war."

Followed then an outline of the peace treaty and of the covenant of the League of Nations, after which he said:

> The league is the first concrete and substantial effort that has been made looking to the prevention of war and the maintenance of international peace. It may be that some provisions are crude and vague and could well be improved upon. We can hardly expect perfection in a first effort in a new field. Time may develop the necessity for amendments, and provision should be made therefor in the covenant.

The right under the constitution to enter the league was upheld, as was also the wisdom of the provisions of the covenant as a whole, and he urged with intense earnestness America's duty to assume her place in the league with the other civilized nations. He did not worry over the "entangling alliance" danger. Alliance or no alliance, America is, he believed, in constant danger of future entanglement, whether the nation wished it or not.

Little as we looked for it in 1914, we were, after all, contrary to the admonitions of the fathers of our country, 'entangled' in a great war, not on our own borders, not anywhere in the western hemisphere, but 3,000 miles away, in the very heart of Europe. It seems to me that our country is, and ought to be, as much interested in preventing the recurrence of any similar war as in entering the war in the first instance. We ought to be as much interested in securing permanent peace results from the war as in making war. It surely cannot be more dangerous to 'entangle' us in securing a permanent peace in Europe than to 'entangle' us in a war in Europe.

These arguments were directly intended, no doubt, for Senator Henry Cabot Lodge and his Republican followers in the senate who had been strong to bring the United States into the war, but who were then bending every effort to defeat the president in his fight for the ratification of the treaty of peace and, with it, the league covenant. The clash between Lodge and President Wilson over the treaty and the league was one of the most memorable duels in American history. As against LaFollette and other anti-war senators who were opposing the approval of the league, Nelson's arguments on this point could have no force. In closing his remarkable speech, the aged senator rose to a high pitch of solemn eloquence:

Organized society seems in many places to be in a soluble state, especially in the old world. Let us not be blind to this condition nor seek to minimize it, but look it squarely in the face. What is needed is to restore law and order throughout the civilized world. A permanent and lasting peace, leading to a full revival of the industrial and commercial activities of the world, will tend to cure this spirit of unrest. Where food and work at good wages abound there is little thought of revolution. Remove the terrors of war—the poor and lowly suffer most therefrom—and mankind will breathe easier and will soon be born to a new life and a new spirit. Would it not be sad to think that our country should stand aloof from such purpose and such mission?

The grandeur of Senator Nelson's character never showed to better advantage than in this period of his career. There he stood, single-handed, among the conservative Republicans, who had insisted on America's participation in the war, solemnly and bravely supporting the Democratic president because he thought that statesman fundamentally right.

Senator Nelson's conduct was dictated by no political considerations. Before the expiration of his term he would be eighty-two years old and another election never appealed to him for a moment. He believed sincerely and firmly that his party was taking a wrong position and bravely he rose to the occasion, though practically alone. He was in fact, as well as name, "The Grand Old Man of Minnesota."

To the very last, he maintained his position. On October 9, 1919, he spoke these words: "I cannot sympathize with that sentiment which would have our country crawl into a closed shell with no other label than the Monroe Doctrine. . . . It will not do for such narrow and selfish views to hide themselves behind a 'holier than thou' cry of patriotism, or, as they choose to call it, 'Americanism.'"

He urged co-operation with the Allies "in securing the blessings of a permanent world peace. . . . I have not made these remarks under the idea that I am a statesman. . . . It has rather been the spirit of old Corporal Nelson of the Fourth Wisconsin."

A month later, in another speech in the senate: "The campaign that has been waged against the League of Nations reminds me very much of the campaign that was waged against the adoption of the Constitution of the United States. . . . Let us keep our heads on, and let us pass just such legislation as we would, if we had today a Republican president."

He voted against the Knox resolution for a separate peace with Germany and defined his position in an able speech in the senate, on April 28, 1921. On January 6, 1923, only a few months before his death, he solemnly reiterated his conviction that it was "the greatest of mistakes, economically and in every other way, for America not to enter the League of Nations, with one or two amendments to the covenant," and warned the country against the intrusion of "peanut politics" in the consideration of international relations.

Fought Reciprocity With Canada

One of Nelson's most determined fights as a senator was against the Taft reciprocity treaty with Canada, which sought to admit agricultural products from Canada free of duty. In an argument before the senate finance committee, he declared that grain production in the Dominion would increase ten fold in a year and would bring ruin to the American grain growers.

"The question is," he said, "will you allow that avalanche from Canada to overwhelm us? And are you going to segregate the farmers from the other classes of the community and say to them that everybody else is entitled to protection, 'but you farmers should shift for yourselves?' "

Senator Nelson urged the adoption of his amendment, which reduced the duties on Canadian farm products, instead of admitting them free.

> The bill as now framed and recommended by the President, [said he], casts the whole burden of reciprocity on the farmers. Everything they raise is put on the free list and, as a consideration for that, these articles in schedule B. . . . are to come in at a reduced rate. Now, you will see the iniquity of this arrangement. Wheat is put on the free list while flour is put in at 50 cents per barrel. . . . If the Canadian government were to seek a scheme to increase and hasten the settlement of that country, none could be invented that would be more conducive to that end than this scheme inaugurated by the President. . . . It will prove stagnation and ruin to our farmers.
>
> Now, I appeal to you, gentlemen, who are in favor of protection —who believe in that system—I appeal to you to treat the farmers of this country as you treat the other classes. . . . and not make us the black sheep in the fold; not say to us that protection is needed by everybody else, but the poor farmers can get along without it.

He made a sharp attack on President Taft, charging that no representative of the northwest was ever consulted by the executive in regard to the reciprocity treaty.

> I do not know who is at the bottom of it [he asserted], but it bears the earmarks of the great railroad companies of the northwest and of the great newspapers of the country. The American railroads, with their various branches and connections in the provinces, can and will, unhampered by the interstate commerce law, carry

the products of the provinces to Chicago as cheaply as from northern Minnesota and the Dakotas. And with no explanation about this intricate subject, leaving the newspapers to think they have got a glorious thing in the paper and pulp provisions of the bill, when they have got a gold brick."

The vote in the senate showed a lineup of twenty-one Republicans for and twenty-four against the treaty, while thirty-two Democrats voted for it and only three against it. The south swung solidly into line for the treaty, presenting the strange spectacle of supporting a Republican president from the north. The progressive Republicans were against the treaty unanimously. So the treaty was ratified by the senate, but in Canada the Conservative minority gave notice of debate, which suspended action on the treaty in parliament and it went to the people of the Dominion for a referendum, with the result that the treaty was defeated. Laurier, who upheld the treaty, went out of office, being permanently eliminated from power.

Because of his bitter opposition to President Taft's reciprocity scheme and his stand against the Payne-Aldrich tariff act, the trusts and combinations in restraint of trade, Nelson was in those days classed as an insurgent, along with LaFollette, Clapp, Cummins and other Republican senators from the northwest. He was not viewed in that light later, however, and the insurgent group grew smaller and smaller during Wilson's administration until LaFollette was left to bear the burden of Republican insurgency practically alone.

Liberal Stand on Immigration

Although he favored restriction within reasonable bounds, Senator Nelson took a liberal attitude toward immigration, as might be expected in view of his foreign birth. In a speech before the senate committee on immigration, May 14, 1896, he upheld a view not unlike that of Professor Schlessinger in his essay on "The Significance of Immigration in American History," published as chapter one of his "New View-points in American History."

The senator had small patience with a narrow policy of exclusion and attributed to the influx of immigrants much of the rapid growth and development of the country, especially of the west. "We have been, to a large extent," said he, "a nation of immigrants and a large share of our history is a history of immigration."

Senator Nelson not only approved of the coming of immigrants from the Nordic races of northern Europe, but of the races from the south of Europe. "The blood that flowed in the veins of Virgil and Dante, Raphael and Michael Angelo, Columbus and Napoleon, Cavour, Garibaldi, Victor Emmanuel and Crispi surely will not contaminate our English of many strains." He paid glowing tribute to the immigrants who played such a prominent part in the development of his own state. "They came there, most of them, poor and empty-handed, with no capital but stout hearts and willing hands, but possessed of an intense desire and purpose to become good American citizens. She received them with open arms, as though they were to the manor born, and on a parity with her own people. And today, after the lapse of half a century, she can truly say that they have not betrayed the trust she reposed in them."

Tariff Stand in Senate

But little needs to be said here as to Senator Nelson's views on the tariff. Except during the nineties, when the political situation seemed to demand that, as the standard bearer of his party in Minnesota, he must conform his position to that of the national Republican platform, he was a consistent low-tariff man, who believed that no duties should exceed the difference in the cost of production at home and abroad. The aim should be, in his opinion, to stimulate competition in the home market and not destroy such competition by forming trusts and combinations.

As a member of the resolutions committee of the national Republican convention of 1900, he took this ground. He was against the Payne-Aldrich tariff bill,

a Republican measure, during the Taft administration, holding that it imposed too high duties and discriminated against the western farmers in favor of the manufacturers of New England. Neither did he support the Underwood-Simmons bill in 1913.

"There are a great many good features in this Democratic tariff bill," he said. "There are a great many matters in it, of which I highly approve. I had hoped I could see my way clear to support it. But, taking the bill in its entirety, there is . . . . gross discrimination against the farmers of the west and the northwest and all along our northern boundary."

In 1922, after the Republicans had returned to power and the Republican leaders in congress were trying to put through the Fordney-McCumber bill, Nelson made a brave stand against certain schedules, especially the one relating to wool. He foresaw the hopelessness of the fight, however, exclaiming in a speech, July 18: "This is love's labor lost." We are in the hands of the wool Philistines. They have us by the throat, and perhaps it would be wiser for us to take the medicine in silence and turn our heads toward Providence and hope to get relief from that source."

Against Federal Reserve Act; For Ship Subsidy

Like most of his Republican colleagues, Senator Nelson opposed the federal reserve act, for which President Wilson fought so strenuously, but he was a strong supporter of President Harding in his efforts to put through congress a ship subsidy bill.

The senator believed that it is of vital importance to America's future prosperity to build up a great merchant marine, and he felt that a subsidy is necessary to bring this about.

One of the disappointing acts of Knute Nelson as a senator was his vote to seat Senator Newberry, Michigan, in the celebrated election contest of 1921. It was his vote for Senator Newberry, more than any other one thing, that defeated Senator Frank B. Kellogg in his

campaign for re-election in 1922. It would seem that in view of the protests he had made in 1882 against the lavish and vicious use of money in the Kindred-Nelson campaign, Nelson would have been very loth to uphold Senator Newberry's right to a seat in the light of the evidence against him.

Last Official Acts

The aged statesman's last appearance in the senate was on February 24, 1923, the day he became ill with the influenza. On that day he introduced his last bills as a legislator, fifty-five years and one month after the first of his bills in the Wisconsin assembly. The titles of these last bills were: "A bill (S. 4619) granting the consent of congress to the reconstruction, maintenance and operation of an existing bridge across the Red river between Grand Forks, North Dakota, and East Grand Forks, Minnesota," and "a bill (S. 4620) granting the consent of congress to the reconstruction, maintenance and operation of an existing bridge across the Red river between Moorhead, Minnesota, and Fargo, North Dakota."

What may be designated as Nelson's last speech in the senate was delivered on January 6, 1923. It was in opposition to the following resolution, offered by Senator Reed of Missouri: "Resolved, That the president is hereby respectfully requested to at once cause the return to the United States of all troops now stationed in Germany."

Senator Nelson's speech was rather brief—less than 1,000 words. It was extemporaneous and touched on the question before the senate, the League of Nations and the merchant marine. He protested against taking up the time of congress in considering matters like the Reed resolution, instead of getting down to business of real consequence. "I do not like this peanut politics about what a great danger it is to leave 1,000 American soldiers over there in Europe," he explained. "What a horrible thing it is to leave 1,000 model American soldiers over there to stabilize conditions! We had better

go to work and pass legislation that is of vital interest to this country—rural credit legislation and the merchant marine bill."

Last Senate Remark on Norway

His last remark on the floor of the senate to be printed in the Congressional Record was made on February 17, 1923, and, strangely significant, related to his native land. Senator Colt was discussing constitutional governments of certain European countries, when the Minnesota senator asked:

"Mr. President, will the senator allow me one interruption?"

Mr. Colt: "I yield to the senator from Minnesota."

Mr. Nelson: "The only other country in the world whose system of government conforms to ours, where the supreme court can declare a law unconstitutional, is the little country of Norway. It is the freest country in Europe. It has a government as free as that of this country; and in that country the supreme court can declare an act of the parliament unconstitutional."

Many, many times had Knute Nelson, as a senator, brought before the American people matters pertaining to the government and the history of Norway. Just before taking his seat in 1895 he prepared an English translation of the constitution of Norway, which was largely modeled upon that of the United States, and a number of years before his death, he prepared an essay on the manner in which the government of his native land deals with industrial controversies between capital and labor.

It has been said that, of all Norwegians in America who have attained distinction in the public service, Knute Nelson was the most distinctively Norwegian and at the same time the most intensely American. At first blush, the statement may seem paradoxical, but in reality it is true, for Knute Nelson possessed in a greater degree than any distinguished American public servant of Norwegian lineage the peculiar characteristics of the race and none of them was so proud of his citizenship in this great republic, so ready and eager to defend it against enemies both from within and without its borders.

Paid His Last Political Debt

On April 28, just a few hours before his death, Senator Nelson called at the White House and obtained from President Harding a promise to appoint William A. Cant, Duluth, to the federal bench in the Minnesota district. Judge Cant was a member of the state legislature in 1895 and was largely instrumental in swinging the St. Louis county delegation into line for the senator in the Washburn-Nelson contest, a service Knute Nelson never forgot.

"I have paid my last political debt," he remarked as he left the White House for the last time.

Senator Nelson was chairman of the judiciary committee during the last years of his service. This is one of the most important in the senate and, as its head, Mr. Nelson wielded extraordinary influence upon legislation. Earlier in his senatorial career he had been chairman of the committees on public lands, commerce and some minor committees, as well as various sub-committees. Other important groups of which he was a member were the committees on banking and currency, territories and rules.

By way of summary of Knute Nelson's service as a senator of the United States, it may be said that no other member from the northwest originated and put through congress more valuable and constructive legislation. Indeed, it has been said by men informed on the subject that during his first two terms in the senate no other member, east or west, north or south, had to his credit so much legislation, constructive, practical and beneficial, during the same period. As a legislator, he has been frequently likened to that exceedingly able, high-minded and industrious statesman and patriot, Senator George F. Hoar of Massachusetts.

Chapter XVIII

YEARS OF SORROW

Letter from Knute Nelson to Bjorn Holland, written from Washington, February 23, 1920:

Most of my schoolmates at Albion academy are dead and gone. In May, 1861, there were 19 of us boys at the academy who enlisted in the Union army. Of the 19 there are only two of us left, myself and another. Even in my present home at Alexandria, Minnesota, where I have resided, except when here, since 1871, most of my old friends are dead and gone, so that when I return home I almost feel as though I was walking in a cemetery. I oftentimes brood and think of the past and of the many friends and schoolmates that have gone, and, when I am thus brooding, I oftentimes feel despondent and discouraged and feel as though my task is done and that I am only marking time.

The aged statesman was writing to one of his oldest friends—one of his schoolmates in Mary Dillon's little school at La Grange. He was unbosoming himself—laying bare his deepest feelings. It is a sad picture we see of the venerable senator, sitting there at Washington, in the twilight of his life. And the sorrow and the gloom had only just begun. Proceeding, the senator wrote:

While you may not have been as prominent in public life as I have been [Mr. Holland had served in the Wisconsin assembly and held other offices in his community in Wisconsin], you have certainly done a lot of good in the world; you have been a good, industrious citizen, friend and neighbor, and on the whole have accomplished as much good in the world as I have. Looking back at the past, I oftentimes feel as though I have accomplished but little and that I ought to have done much more good than I have done, but all you and I can say at this time is:

"Let the dead past bury its dead;
Act, act in the living present,
Heart within and God o'erhead!"

I trust I may hear from you more frequently. Such newsy letters as yours are always a cheer and comfort.

One reason, perhaps, why the venerable senator felt so keenly the loss of his old friends at home was the

change that had come over the politics of Douglas county. New leaders had come into control, a new spirit possessed the people. These new leaders included few, if any, of Knute Nelson's old friends; the new spirit was not the spirit of the party to which he had adhered these many years. We have seen how in the Populist days of the nineties some of the rural precincts of Douglas county turned against Nelson in his campaigns for governor, but in each instance the county, as a whole, stood by him. In 1918, however, when, in response to the call of the president, to the urging of the foremost leaders of both the old parties in Minnesota, to the voice of the press of the state, he finally departed from his original resolve not to serve beyond his fourth term and again placed his name on the primary ballot as a candidate for senator, the home county gave a majority of its votes to his opponent, and at the general election returned a still larger majority in favor of the new candidate of the opposition. Even the township of Alexandria, in which the senator's farm is situated, declared against him, both in June and November. The city of Alexandria gave him a handsome indorsement, but even there a portion of the electors showed unmistakable hostility.

Why should Douglas, of all the counties in the Park Region, assume this attitude? Because of the Nonpartisan league. Very well, but why, in particular, should the league obtain such a foothold in Douglas county? It was not nearly so strong in any of the adjacent counties —Senator Nelson carried them all.

There were peculiar reasons why the organization, which was founded by A. C. Townley in North Dakota in 1915, which won complete control of the politics of that state and then sought to extend its conquests into Minnesota, grew so strong in the home county of Knute Nelson.

Some years before the campaign of 1918 the Park Region Echo was moved from the village of Brandon, Douglas county, to Alexandria. It was a "reform" paper, urging changes in the liquor laws and more strin-

gent legislation against the trusts and all the other forces and agencies generally believed to be enemies of the people and of popular government. Its editor was Carl A. Wold, who was credited with sincerity of purpose and a desire to do right in politics as he saw the right. In 1914 he was elected to the state legislature on a reform platform, including state prohibition of the liquor traffic. A majority of the business men of Alexandria did not like Mr. Wold and some of his principles. They fought him bitterly, refused to advertise in his paper, and in 1916 supported a local brewer for the legislature in preference to Mr. Wold, who was defeated for re-election. His defeat embittered Mr. Wold, especially in view of his opponent's business and attitude on the liquor question, which had for years been a burning issue in the county, due very largely to the work of the well known temperance leader and orator, the late Senator E. E. Lobeck.

Mr. Wold laid the lash on the local business men of Alexandria. The war between him and them grew more and more bitter. Most of the farmers sympathized with Mr. Wold. They felt that he had been unjustly treated —even persecuted.

Then came the Nonpartisan league organizers, with their new propaganda. Mr. Wold received them with open arms—opened the columns of his paper to them, supported their creed and their organization. That was a wonderful help. The readers of the Echo joined the league and exerted themselves to persuade others to join.

While the organization work for the league was going on, America entered the World war. Douglas county has a very large German population; also a large Swedish and Norwegian population. The Germans were bitterly opposed to our nation's participation in the struggle on the side of their fatherland's enemies. A large majority of the Swedes and Norwegians felt the same way. To them it did not seem to be America's quarrel. The Nonpartisan league organizers, from Townley down, had opposed America's entrance into the war. Editor Wold, in his paper, had agitated against the war. It

did not take the German, the Swedish and the Norwegian farmers long to find out that the league had stood with them in opposition to our war declaration. So there was another reason why they joined the league.

After we had entered the war, some of the league leaders, including Townley, thought they could go on discussing the right and the wrong of the war, just as if it were an ordinary political question. They did not realize that such talk was then treason. They made some very indiscreet remarks, which patriotic people regarded as disloyal. So, intense feeling rose against them. So, many of them were arrested and were denounced as "pro-Germans." Editor Wold was arrested for something he said about the war in his paper.

The bitterness grew on both sides. All of the big dailies and almost all of the little weeklies denounced A. C. Townley, the league organizers and the league itself. The words "disloyal" and "pro-German" flew thick and fast. Before long the farmers who had joined the league came to believe that they, too, were called disloyal and pro-German.

This they resented most bitterly, as was perfectly natural. Their hearts were filled with bitterness against the old line Republican leaders and the Republican candidates, from Governor Burnquist down. There was much carelessness in the use of the words "pro-German" and "disloyal." Those were cruel times, not only at the front, but here at home.

Carl A. Wold was convicted in the district court of the disloyalty charge against him, but died soon after, without serving his sentence. The league farmers felt that his death was caused partly, if not wholly, by persecution—that he was a martyr to the cause he championed —which added still more to the rancor and bitterness in their hearts.

Senator Nelson was in Washington when most of these things happened. He was not among those who indulged in the reckless and indiscriminate use of the terms "disloyal," "un-American," "Bolshevik," "pro-

German." But one day he dropped a remark in the United States senate which A. C. Townley did not like and, in a speech to a vast throng of farmers at Alexandria, the league leader quoted that remark—and it was printed in the Echo. That was enough to prove to the farmers, if they thought proof were needed, that Knute Nelson was an enemy of the Nonpartisan league; that he was against their cause; that he was hand in glove with "big business," and was in sympathy with the crusade against them on account of the war. So they voted against him in the primaries and in the election. They would have voted for the proverbial "yellow dog" in preference to Senator Nelson or any other regular Republican. Even if Senator Nelson had said absolutely nothing to offend Townley and the other league leaders, the very fact that he was being lauded by the "kept press" and the forces that fought the league was sufficient to damn him among the farmers of Douglas county.

Serious Family Misfortune

While he said but little about it, the aged senator felt the thrust of the home county keenly. Two years later, followed a more cruel blow. His only daughter, the only surviving child, among six children, married a man who had an altercation with a neighbor named Arthur Middleton and shot him during the trouble. He was convicted of murder by a jury in the district court of Douglas county. He was granted a new trial, and got a change of venue to Fergus Falls, on the grounds of local prejudice. Again he was found guilty and is now serving a long sentence in the state penitentiary.

If the man who succeeded Carl Wold as editor of the Park Region Echo had in him much of the milk of human kindness, he did not show it by his conduct of the paper during the period when all these things took place. He played up the murder case in all its sensational aspects, and it appeared to those at a distance, at least, as if he secretly gloated over the anguish and mortification that he knew the venerable senator and father suffered. Mr. Nelson wrote a letter at the time,

which shows the depth of that suffering—how he felt in the midst of the storm of popular indignation aroused by his son-in-law's act—a storm intensified by the sensational handling of the trials, and all the attending circumstances, by the local league paper. It was written to a Fergus Falls editor, who, in his paper, came out with a strong expression of sympathy for Senator Nelson and his family because of the distressing situation in which they were placed, thereby rebuking, by inference, the inhuman conduct of the editor at Alexandria. In a few days came this short letter, written with Senator Nelson's own hand:

Alexandria, Minn., Oct. 7, 1920.

Personal and Confidential—

Friend Odland: I heartily thank you for your kind and sympathetic editorial mention about me and my family and about the trouble of my son-in-law.

It is a hard blow upon me in my old age, but I have in my long and chequered career weathered many storms, and hope to survive this.

With best wishes I remain

Yours truly,

KNUTE NELSON.

This little letter is most illuminating, to say the least. It not only reveals the intensity of the aged senator's suffering, but also the fine human qualities of the man. The editor to whom he addressed the letter had done very little—nobody could do much in such a situation—but Senator Nelson saw in the publication of his editorial the act of a friend, and no man in the wide world was more appreciative of acts of friendship than Knute Nelson. None of his friends ever appealed to him for help in vain, if it were possible for him to help. "He stood by his friends." That is one of the most common remarks one hears about Knute Nelson.

DEATH OF MRS. KNUTE NELSON

Mrs. Nelson's health had been declining, and the shock of the events here recorded weakened her materially. Finally she was placed in a Washington hospital,

but nothing could be done to relieve her. She died August 8, 1922. The remains were brought home to Alexandria and buried in Kinkead cemetery. The honorary pall bearers were Governor Preus, Congressman Harold Knutson, Lee M. Willcuts of Duluth, Judge J. F. McGee of Minneapolis, G. A. Kortsch and J. A. Wedum of Alexandria.

The funeral sermon was preached by the pastor of the Norwegian Lutheran church of Alexandria, the Reverend A. T. Tjornhom. Many notables, besides the honorary pall bearers, were in attendance.

The long illness and death of his good wife added to Senator Nelson's sorrow as the end drew near.

While enlarging upon the events that brought the gloom and sadness, mention should be made of the passing of Maria Sanford, the best loved woman in the history of Minnesota. Miss Sanford died at the senator's home in Washington, on the night of April 20, 1920. She was found dead in her room the next morning. She had come to the capital city, April 19, to deliver her famous apostrophe to the flag at the national convention of the Daughters of the American Revolution. She and the senator had been friends for years, having become acquainted while he was a member of the board of regents, and she a professor in the University of Minnesota. Between the two there had long existed the warmest mutual admiration—the regard of one sincere soul for another. Miss Sanford had been Mr. Nelson's guest on all of her former visits to Washington. Her unexpected death at his home was a severe shock to the senator, deepening the shadows and the gloom.

His Last Campaign Speech

Mr. Nelson did not take a hand in the campaign of 1922, except to speak a couple of times. His strength was ebbing. On October 23, 1922, he wrote as follows to Elmer E. Adams of Fergus Falls in response to an invitation to speak in Otter Tail county:

Friend Adams: I am not very well and shall have to keep quiet for some time. I was in Detroit last night, but was half sick, and

after an hour's talk I was exhausted and could hardly continue. Vitality at 80 is not like that at 70, and it has to be nursed.

The Detroit speech, to which he referred, delivered on the night of October 22, 1922, is the last campaign address of Knute Nelson's long career. It was delivered fifty-eight years after his speech at Albion academy in behalf of Abraham Lincoln's candidacy for re-election as president. It is rather significant, as it was fitting, that it was given in the village where was enacted the most stirring scene in the famous Kindred-Nelson drama. The speech dealt with the wastefulness of the Democratic administration during the World war, and, until his strength began to fail, was delivered with almost as much vigor as any of his old-time campaign speeches.

Senator Nelson's last political address at Alexandria was delivered on the night of October 12, when he spoke with Senator Irvine L. Lenroot of Wisconsin, and former Congressman A. P. Nelson of the same state. He indorsed the entire Republican ticket—Frank B. Kellogg for United States senator, Andrew J. Volstead for congressman, J. A. O. Preus for governor. Senator Lenroot paid a glowing tribute to Nelson and said that he "wondered if the people of Alexandria realized his true greatness, or if it were a case of the prophet who is not without honor save in his own country, since they were so close to him as to be unable to view him in his proper relationship with the rest of the country."

Four days later the aged senator delivered a non-political address before the Alexandria post of the G. A. R. There he told the story of his experiences in the Union army and spoke of the pride he felt when he received the warrant that made him a corporal. That he prized more, said he, than any commission or honor he had ever received as a congressman, governor or senator. This was Knute Nelson's last G. A. R. talk and, so far as we have been able to learn, the last public address he gave in his home city.

Not long after the election of 1922, Senator Nelson returned to his duties at Washington. That was the

home folk's last view of him in life. When they saw him again, in May, 1923, he lay in his coffin in the Alexandria armory.

"I shall never forget my last meeting with Senator Nelson," remarked the daughter of one of his pioneer friends at Alexandria. "It was in front of his block on Main street, just a week or two before he bade farewell to Alexandria for the last time. He stopped to inquire as to the condition of my mother and, when I had told him, and had explained what I was trying to do to make things pleasant for her, he put his hand on my arm and feelingly said: 'That's right; always be good to your mother.' When he turned and walked up the stairway to his office, the tears were running down his cheeks."

Similar manifestations of feeling and sadness in his intercourse with his neighbors at that time were not uncommon.

His daughter did not accompany him to Washington, and during the ensuing winter and spring his wife's niece, Mrs. Edith Truscott of Jennings, Oregon, kept house for him in the capital. His health remained fairly good during the early winter months, and he was a regular attendant at the senate sessions. When he celebrated his 80th birthday anniversary, February 2, 1923, the Alexandria Citizen-News remarked, "He is still a very capable man, both mentally and physically, and well qualified to continue to serve the people of this state as he has so signally done in the past."

Eightieth Birthday Anniversary

The senator celebrated the anniversary of his birth by working at his desk in the senate office building. On the following day, his colleagues paid him a tribute of respect and affection such as few senators ever receive. Both Democrats and Republicans applauded heartily when Nelson rose in his place and reported a resolution as chairman of the great judiciary committee. Speeches in praise of Minnesota's "Grand Old Man" were delivered by Senator Claude Swanson of Virginia, the Democratic floor leader; Senator Thomas Caraway of Arkansas,

Senator Duncan Fletcher of Florida, and Senator Frank M. Warren of Wyoming.

"If all the property I own and all my interests, were in his hands, I would know that I would always get what we in this country call a square deal," said Senator Warren in closing the eulogies of the day.

Mr. President, [said Nelson in reply, greatly moved], permit me only a word in reference to what the senators have just said. I assure the senators that it is a great comfort to me that I have the confidence and good will of my associates in this body, on both sides of the chamber. I have always aimed to conduct myself in such a spirit of fairness that no one could complain of any injustice on my part, and that will be my aim in the future. I assure the senators from Virginia and the other side of the chamber that I appreciate very much their confidence and good wishes.

Reading His Pastime

Reading was the Senator's favorite pastime and chief consolation in his lonely old age.

I spent the last Sunday before his illness with him, [wrote Elmer E. Adams, after the statesman's death.] I found him upstairs in a little room which he called his office, very meagerly furnished, but well filled with books. I found him reading a history of the Civil war, which he said was the best history of the war which had ever been written. As I was about to leave, he said, "Let me show you how I have my light fixed so that I can read after I go to bed." We stepped into an alcove, where there was a very cheap iron bed, and he had arranged his electric light so that by pulling a string he could turn the light on or off. He said that he found real comfort in his old age in lying in bed and reading, and it seemed like real luxury to have this light so handy.

Another illuminating picture of Minnesota's "Grand Old Man." Still the same unassuming, unaffected son of a plain people, though occupying one of the most commanding positions in the world's greatest parliament.

Chapter XIX

ACROSS THE HARBOR BAR

Sunset and evening star,
And one clear call for me!
And may there be no moaning at the bar
When I put out to sea.

An epidemic of influenza prevailed in Washington in the winter of 1923, and on February 24 Senator Nelson was taken seriously ill with the disease. He was given the best of care by the nurse who attended Mrs. Nelson during her long illness, but weakness of the heart developed, and the senator did not gain sufficient strength to resume his place in the capitol, although he was able to make an occasional visit to his desk in the senate office building.

After the adjournment of congress, March 4, he expressed a desire to return to Alexandria, but his physicians urged him to remain in Washington till the weather grew warm in Minnesota. It seemed that the aged statesman had premonitions of an early summons and longed to die in his old home on the farm, so, as May 1 drew near, nothing could keep him from going. On the day before the date fixed for the departure he suffered a severe heart attack, but rallied and refused to put off the journey.

Accompanied by Mrs. Truscott, he left Washington about 6:30 p. m. over the Pennsylvania line. Two citizens of Minnesota—George A. Wells, state insurance commissioner, and Walter W. Belford, his first assistant, who had been attending a convention in Virginia—boarded the same train, but did not see Senator Nelson till later in the evening.

We were in the same sleeping car as the senator, [said Mr. Wells in a recent interview] but sat in the smoking compartment in the front end. About 8 o'clock we took seats near the middle of the car, and I noticed a man with his back turned toward me in whom

I recognized Senator Nelson. He was talking to Mrs. Young, the wife of Congressman George M. Young of North Dakota.

Mrs. Young rose to leave for her berth, and the senator got up to take the seat across from him, so that he would not be riding backward. A minute or two afterward I noticed that he began leaning over to one side, with his head drooping, and I realized that something must have happened to him. At the same moment Mrs. Truscott became alarmed and called to the porter.

The senator did not answer when they spoke to him. The porter walked down the aisle and asked if there were any physicians in the car. A Mr. Ewing, who described himself as a medical missionary to China, came forward to examine the senator. He had no instruments, but placed his ear against the senator's breast to determine whether the heart was beating. The noise of the train, however, made it impossible to tell. The next station was the little village of York, where the train was stopped for the purpose of summoning a doctor. There Mr. Ewing again placed his ear to the senator's breast and announced that the heart was not beating.

It was 8:15 o'clock, on the evening of April 28, 1923. The greatest Norseman in the western hemisphere had crossed the harbor bar.

Twilight and evening bell,
And after that the dark!
And may there be no sadness of farewell
When I embark;

For though from out our bourne of Time and Place
The flood may bear me far,
I hope to see my pilot face to face,
When I have crossed the bar.

Impressive Military Funeral

The body was removed from the train at Harrisburg, Pennsylvania, where it was prepared for burial. It was placed in a simple bronze casket, with the flag for which Knute Nelson had fought draped about it, and was sent on its way to the old home Sunday evening. Mr. Wells and Mr. Belford, who were the last of all Minnesotans to see the senator alive, and Simon Michelet, his secretary, accompanied the remains to Chicago, which was reached early Monday morning. There the funeral train was met by an official delegation from Minnesota, headed by Governor Preus, an intimate personal friend of the dead statesman. The body was met in St. Paul

by a military escort, composed of details from the Third United States infantry, Fort Snelling units, and of Minnesota National Guards. From the station the casket was borne to the state capitol, where, under the dome, built by the commission Knute Nelson had appointed as governor, it lay in state, while thousands of people filed past for a last look at the fallen leader and fighter, who had been vanquished at last.

Hour after hour the unbroken column passed on, while hundreds watched from the upper floors. It was noticeable that a large portion of the mourners, who came to view the remains, were elderly people, some of them even older than the deceased statesman. They were the ones who had fought with him and for him in the strenuous days of old, who had felt his firm handclasp at the rallies which he had later addressed, and had watched him with ever-increasing respect and admiration uphold the rights of the people and the dignity of the state in the senate. The governor and the living former governors of the commonwealth stood near a part of the time, and a military guard was in constant attendance.

In the evening the remains were carried from the capitol back to the railway station, escorted by the entire United States Third infantry and numerous companies and detachments from other military organizations of the state and nation.

A delegation of Alexandria citizens, composed of Doctor A. D. Haskell, the mayor; Senator C. J. Gunderson, C. T. Howe, G. A. Kortsch, Constant Larson and L. S. Kent, attended the ceremonies at the capitol and accompanied the remains to the home city. There they arrived Tuesday night and were taken to the statesman's home, where they remained until the next day, when they were removed to the Alexandria armory for the funeral services.

The armory was packed with mourners, who came from all parts of the state and from beyond its borders. A delegation from the United States senate, composed of Senators Edge of New Jersey, Ernst of Kentucky,

Kendrick of Wyoming, McCormick of Illinois and Shipstead of Minnesota, was in attendance. The governor, several other Minnesota state officials, the chief justice of the state supreme court, several other judges, both state and federal, Minnesota congressmen and former congressmen, leaders of the Minnesota bar, prominent representatives of the state press, veterans of the Civil war, members and former members of the Minnesota legislature and men and women, from all walks of life, were there to pay homage to the foremost citizen of the commonwealth.

There were two funeral sermons, one by the Rev. A. T. Tjornhom, pastor of the Norwegian Lutheran church of Alexandria; the other by the Right Rev. H. G. Stub of St. Paul, president of the Norwegian Lutheran Church of America.

"Know ye not that there is a prince and a great man fallen this day in Israel?" This, from the second book of Samuel, the third chapter and the thirty-eighth verse, was the text of Doctor Stub's sermon. In closing, the venerable pastor, a life-long friend of the departed statesman, in behalf of the Norwegian Lutheran Church of America, laid a wreath of flowers on Knute Nelson's bier as a token of love.

The text of the Rev. Mr. Tjornhom's sermon was these verses from the fifth chapter of the first book of Peter: "For God resisteth the proud and giveth to the humble. Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God that He may exalt you in due time."

A quartet sang "Lead Kindly Light," and some of the old familiar Lutheran hymns, loved by the senator, were also sung. After the service, the casket, still draped with the national colors, was borne by a military escort, under the direction of Adjutant General Rhinow, to the caisson, drawn by six black horses. Then, with the Fort Snelling military band in the lead, followed by a company of soldiers, the funeral procession was formed, and proceeded slowly to Kinkead cemetery in the west end of the city, where the senator was laid beside his wife and four children.

In Norway it is customary to speak words of eulogy in honor of the dead at the grave and, in accordance with this custom, Mr. E. H. Hobe, of St. Paul, consul for Norway in the northwest, who had been commissioned by the Norwegian government to attend the funeral as its representative, voiced the sorrow of the homeland over the senator's passing at his grave. Mr. Hobe delivered an expressive tribute to the statesman's memory and testified to the high esteem and love in which he is held in the land of his birth. He declared that the name of Knute Nelson is a household word in that country and will so remain for ages to come. At the close of his address he placed a beautiful wreath, decorated with the Norwegian national colors and with an inscription in gold letters from the government of Norway, on the fallen leader's bier.

The last home-coming and the last leave-taking of Knute Nelson at Alexandria had taken place.

Effect of His Passing

As all realized that Knute Nelson had lived beyond the age usually allotted to men, that he had finished his task and stood ready to answer the final summons, the grief caused by his death was not so intense or so general as it would have been had he been stricken in his prime. But the regret and the sorrow were deep-felt, and the honors paid to his memory were extraordinary. The press of the state and the nation devoted more space, perhaps, to his eventful career than it ever did to that of any other Minnesotan. All of the leading papers of the state, both daily and weekly, printed editorial tributes, and many of the great dailies of the nation at large did likewise.

The Wisconsin legislature, which was then in session, adopted a resolution, written by Albert O. Barton, a well known historical writer of Madison, in which the career of the distinguished former Wisconsin assemblyman was ably and fittingly reviewed, and the sympathy of the people of Wisconsin extended to the sister state.

In Norway, Senator Nelson's death caused almost as

general sorrow and interest as in Minnesota. The government conveyed, through the Norwegian minister at Washington, to the senate of the United States, its sympathy. "The Norwegian nation," ran the message, "has followed with the keenest interest the wonderful career of this Norwegian boy, who rose to the foremost positions in the country which adopted him as one of its own sons. Always faithful to the land of his adoption, he never forgot the land of his birth."

The people of Alaska were also profoundly affected by the senator's passing, for ever since his visit to the territory twenty years before, they had recognized in him their most helpful friend at Washington. Both branches of the territorial legislature adopted resolutions of respect to his memory.

His Religious Beliefs

Among the charges preferred against Senator Nelson in the Kindred campaign was the one that he did not believe in Christianity. Not a few believed this at the time and it appears that to the end of his life there was a rather general impression that, although he might not be an agnostic or atheist, he was not a devout believer. In the hope of ascertaining the exact truth as to Senator Nelson's religious beliefs and professions of Christianity, the author addressed an inquiry to the Reverend A. T. Tjornhom of Alexandria, and in reply received the following lucid and comprehensive statement:

> My first impressions of him were that he was a man of deep religious convictions and experience. My later impressions only verified the first. When I came to Alexandria in 1919 to take charge of the work as pastor of the First Norwegian Lutheran church, I was told that Mr. Nelson took no interest in church work, and that he was so absorbed in political matters that he had no time nor inclination for church affairs. However, I was soon pleasantly surprised one day, when Mr. Nelson called me into his office and presented me with a generous check for our local church work. This he did every year, although he was not a member of the local Lutheran church, nor of any other church here or elsewhere. Mr. Nelson attended church here only a few times. He told me that his work and the endless stream of callers, beginning early Sunday morning

and continuing throughout the week, hindered him many a time when he had planned to attend church services.

He also mentioned the fact that some of his enemies had misrepresented him and charged him with being an atheist. He was very fond of many of the old Norwegian hymns, especially those depicting the woes and sorrows of this life and pointing to the Savior, who alone could blot out these things. On one occasion he quoted from memory a number of verses. A day or two after his death I called at his home. His daughter invited me into his library, where we found a Norwegian translation of T. Moore's well known hymn: "Come Ye Disconsolate Where'er Ye Languish,," written on scratch paper. I learned that he wrote this some time following the loss by diphtheria of three small children, in the seventies. This shows how he sought comfort and consolation from sorrows and worries of this life at the throne of heaven. The translation was never published, so far as I know.

Although the senator, as far as I know, did not make a practice of publicly professing any preference as far as church affiliation is concerned, he told me that he was proud of being a Lutheran and cherished very much the heritage he received from his mother and his early church training.

He also mentioned to me the attitude of certain pastors within the Norwegian Synod during the Civil war on the slavery question. Although he admitted this may have estranged him from the church at that time, he said it was not the reason he had continued to remain a non-member.

At Washington he attended quite regularly the services of an English Lutheran church. Both Mr. and Mrs. Nelson mentioned several times Dr. Butler, pastor of this church. He also attended the Norwegian Lutheran church at Washington, especially when Rev. Bjorge, a close friend of his, preached. Rev. Bjorge is the president of the eastern district of the Norwegian Lutheran church. Senator Nelson was baptized and confirmed in the Lutheran church. Mrs. Nelson was an active member of the mission society of the local Norwegian Lutheran church.

Left Modest Fortune

Senator Nelson left a modest fortune, valued at about $115,000, consisting of his farm at Alexandria, a business block in the same village, a residence in Washington and securities. While he wished to provide a competence for himself and family, he was never possessed of an ambition to acquire wealth, for the luxuries that go with wealth held no charms for him, his tastes and his habits being so simple.

The home he owned in Washington was at 649 East

Above: Knute Nelson's Home at Alexandria.
Below: His Grave in Kinkead Cemetery, Alexandria.

Capitol street, in a section of the city occupied by people of very moderate incomes. It was an old three-story brick dwelling of plain appearance, and very simply furnished.

Senator Nelson left a will which bequeathed a portion of his estate to his two step-brothers, William Nelson, a lawyer of Deerfield, and Henry Nelson, a farmer of Whitewater, Wisconsin, and other relatives, while to his only surviving child, Mrs. Ida G. Nelson of Alexandria, he gave the remainder of his property, with the provision that, after her death, the Alexandria home is to be taken over by the Norwegian Lutheran Church of America and used as a home for needy and deserving old people. The senator's intimate friend, Governor J. A. O. Preus, was named as executor of the will.

Nelson Memorials

As was stated in the first chapter, a memorial to Senator Nelson was erected at Evanger, Voss, in 1924. It is in the form of a "bauta," with a medallion of the statesman's likeness.

In 1896 a bust of the senator was made by Jacob Fjelde, the talented Norwegian-American sculptor, and stands today in the senate chamber of the Minnesota state capitol. This was paid for by 100 Minnesota citizens of Norse extraction and is a striking likeness of Senator Nelson as he appeared at that time.

Soon after the senator's death a movement was set on foot to honor his memory by the erection of an appropriate monument in front of the Minnesota state capitol, opposite the John A. Johnson memorial. To this the Minnesota legislature gave its approval. The funds are being raised by popular subscriptions, under the supervision of the Knute Nelson Memorial Committee, and a sum adequate to defray the cost of the memorial is now assured. The committee is composed of forty prominent citizens of Minnesota, of whom Mr. Charles W. Gordon, St. Paul, is chairman; Mr. O. M. Nelson, St. Paul, treasurer, and Mr. Charles J. Moos, St. Paul,

secretary. The sculptor, who is to prepare the memorial, will be selected in the near future.

"Fifty Years in the Public Service"

It is regrettable that Senator Nelson did not live to carry out his intention of writing a story of his own life under the caption, "Fifty Years in the Public Service." Such a work would have been of great value to students of history and would, no doubt, have found a very large circle of interested readers. No other statesman in the northwest, except Allison of Iowa, served so long in public office—two years as a Wisconsin assemblyman, two years as county attorney, four years as state senator, ten years as regent of the University of Minnesota, six years as representative in congress, more than two years as governor and more than twenty-eight years as United States senator. That he made good in all of these positions is ample proof of his ability, his wisdom and the strength of his character.

Chapter XX

PERSONAL TRAITS; ESTIMATES AND TRIBUTES

Knute Nelson had a unique personality. There has never been another man of his peculiar type in American politics and there never will be. In that respect he may be likened to Abraham Lincoln.

In the small and inconsequential affairs of life, [said Simon Michelet, the senator's last private secretary and long-time friend], he had his obstinacies. He had his views on lemonade, of which he drank large quantities. Venders of soft drinks, who tried to pass some synthetic lemonade on him, heard from him in no uncertain terms, and many times have I known him to stand by while the vender was forced to show his lemons, his sugar and even the water from which he proposed to concoct the drink.

It was his invariable habit to walk to and from his office, a distance of some nine blocks. He had a prescribed route, from which he never varied in the slightest degree. It was a zigzag trail and nothing could make him change it. He never used his auto for any of his daily duties. He would use his auto on special occasions.

There was an underlying conservatism in his character. His clear, logical mind made sure of that in all affairs of state and likewise in the conduct of his daily life. For instance, he held his chauffeur down to fifteen miles an hour and no press of engagement could win from him a command to exceed this limit. If he had an engagement, he allowed a wide margin of time to reach his destination. Complementary to this punctuality, was his insistence that all who had engagements with him keep them to the minute. He was always there on time and woe to him who was late. He would accept no apologies for a broken engagement, no matter how trivial the occasion. No man in Washington was more popular with servants, elevator men, etc., and this was the result of no effort to that end on his part, but of his sincerity. He simply did not recognize classes, for he was a true democrat, an unconscious democrat.

He was scrupulously neat in his dress, but always simple in his tastes. In fact, he never took a prejudice to those whose apparel was at all conspicuous, yet he had no patience with a slovenly man. He was vigorously abstemious in his diet. He ate the same foods day in and day out the year round. He never used butter, never ate red meats, no desserts, pie or cakes. It was his firm conviction that a simple diet preserved his health and his faculties. . . . He usually went to bed at nine o'clock and was up at five in the morning. He never would have a telephone in his house. He felt that when he

had put in a full day in the office, he had done his work and should have his evenings to himself. . . . He kept away from official social functions. Two or three times a year he felt he had to make his appearance. He was never seen in the hotel lobbies and clubs of Washington, where public men are wont to gather. . . . When he passed through the Twin Cities on his way to and from Washington, it was rarely that he could be induced to leave the train. When he did, he avoided all offers to entertain him.

The senator was a frugal man, yet cared little for money. Early in life he made the rule that, no matter how small his income, some of it must be saved, and he kept this rule to the end.

A curious example of his type of mind was his application for a pension. He did not need the money, but wanted the pension in order to be on a basis of equality with his fellow members of the G. A. R. He made a solemn occasion of his application. I had to go with him and witness the application in due form.

He took but one vacation and that was a failure and lasted but three days. The senator had injured his foot, alighting from a moving street car and decided to go to Waukesha, Wisconsin. In his frugal way, he secured a rate at the resort hotel for two weeks, but at the end of the third day he appeared before the clerk with his bag in hand and asked for his bill. The clerk questioned him, on the suspicion that he had a grievance, but the senator told him no; that he was having his first vacation and found three days of doing nothing all he could stand.

He was a lover of the soil so much that he never carried any life insurance, believing that a good farm was the best insurance that a man could have.

Senator Nelson's devotion to his old friends is revealed in striking fashion by an incident in the fall of 1922, a few months before his death. He then made a trip from Alexandria to St. Cloud for the sole purpose of paying Charles A. Gilman a visit. He went direct from the train to the Gilman home, but was told that Mr. Gilman was somewhere else in the city. The aged senator enlisted the help of Mr. J. D. Sullivan in his efforts to find him and finally succeeded in locating his old friend. For hours the two veterans of hard-fought political wars talked over old times, with keen enjoyment. Then the senator took the train back home. It was their last visit and was doubtless remembered with pleasure by Mr. Nelson so long as he lived, and will occupy a bright place in Mr. Gilman's memory so long as his life is spared.

Senator Nelson's rugged democracy was shown by his

refusal to use his influence to obtain commissions for Minnesota men during the World war. He wanted to see everybody enter the service without special privileges and let them win honors and commissions by their gallantry at the front. But when Mr. Louis L. Collins, the son of his old friend, Judge L. W. Collins, came to him with the sad news that he couldn't get into the service as a private, because of his lack of avoirdupois, the old fighter got into his overcoat without a moment's delay and hurried over to the war department to see what could be done about it. The under-sized Collins got into the service with the senator's help and became Minnesota's "Little Corporal" of the World war.

Mr. Nelson was old-fashioned in many of his ideas, and nothing could make him change them. Thus, he refused positively to make his business block at Alexandria modern by installing a steam heating plant, and resisted proposed innovations at his farm home that would have made for greater modernness and, perhaps, greater comfort and convenience. And when Main street at Alexandria was to be paved, the venerable statesman remarked, with a sad shake of his head, as he watched the breaking up of the hard surface of the thoroughfare:

"What a shame to spoil that fine street!"

In his youth, Senator Nelson was much below the average in size, but in his maturer years, while below the medium height, weighed about 180 pounds. He looked and acted like a man of unusual force and vigor. A unique, striking figure, he drew attention wherever he appeared and, like all real leaders, appealed strongly to the imagination of the people.

Senator Nelson's Place in History

History is often slow to render judgment as to the greatness of men. Leaders in war, in art, in literature, in science, in statecraft, who achieve a brilliant fame in their day, flashing across the sky like splendid orbs, pass into oblivion even before their death, while the glory of others shines on and on. Immediately after the death

of Lincoln, James Russell Lowell declared that it was impossible at that moment to foretell the future estimate of the martyr president. And there was ample reason for Lowell's caution. Lincoln's public career was of very short duration, and he was suddenly cut off in the midst of it. The nation was still torn asunder. What the fruits of his leadership would be, posterity alone was to know.

In the case of a man like Knute Nelson it is safer to venture an opinion as to his future rank. His leadership extended over forty years. He passed through greater storms than any other political leader in Minnesota; he was tried in many ways, in many capacities, but always held his own; his star never dimmed.

Because of the extreme simplicity of his life and of his unassuming ways, because he professed so little in reference to his own achievements, and because he lacked the brilliance and the glamor of a great orator, few or none put too high an estimate on Knute Nelson's greatness, while thousands underrated him entirely. There can be no doubt that his place in history is secure and, so far as the history of Minnesota is concerned, a very large one. Of the leaders that the state has yet produced, none will outlive him in fame.

The statement of Senator C. J. Gunderson, made at Alexandria in 1911, that Knute Nelson's name will "stand in Minnesota with those of Windom and Ramsey and Cushman K. Davis," commends itself to the judgment of the best minds today, as it did when uttered fifteen years ago.

Chance or accident played a smaller part in Knute Nelson's great career than in that of any other Minnesota leader. His success was due to his unerring judgment, his remarkable common sense, his untiring energy and industry, his intellectual force, the strength of his indomitable will and of his character.

We have already recorded the high estimate placed upon Knute Nelson's character and achievements by Cyrus Northrop, James J. Hill, Theodore Roosevelt and Woodrow Wilson. Such men are not in the habit of

passing snap judgment; they value their opinions too highly for that. Now, in closing this biography, we shall present a few more estimates of the senator given by men equally distinguished, equally well informed as to the quality of his work and his character.

Opinion of Senator Beveridge

One of the best qualified men in America to pass judgment on the character, the ability and the rank of Knute Nelson is former Senator A. J. Beveridge of Indiana. For twelve years he was a brilliant member of the senate, and since his retirement he has won a name for himself as one of the ablest writers in America, his "Life of John Marshall" being regarded everywhere as a masterpiece. A few months ago the author wrote to Senator Beveridge, asking for his candid opinion of Knute Nelson's work and standing as a senator and statesman. Here is his answer, written January 3, 1926:

I was intimately associated with the late Senator Nelson during my entire 12 years in the senate. He was a member of the committee on territories, of which I was chairman and which for three or four years had very heavy work and hard fighting to do. In other senatorial labors we were together almost constantly. In this way I came to know Senator Nelson very well indeed.

I cannot speak too highly of his public services. He was one of the most industrious men I ever have known. He studied public questions with meticulous care and made up his mind from personal examination and appraisement of all available data. He was wise and far-seeing; and he took his stand on every question solely from the point of view of the public interest as he understood the public interest to be.

He was infinitely courageous; indeed, it may almost be said that Senator Nelson was well-nigh without fear. He was absolutely honest and whole-heartedly patriotic. His service in the senate was inspired by the same motives which caused him to join the Union army and fight for the preservation of the nation.

In short, I regarded Senator Nelson as one of the most worthwhile men who have served the country in any official capacity. With all his unselfish devotion to the common good, his notable ability and high ideals, he was cautious and very clever. He understood men, knew how to work with them and understood that most difficult of arts, the art of getting things done. I considered Senator Nelson a statesman in the true meaning of that much misused word.

It is one of the things of which I am proudest that we were close

and steadfast friends, and I take pride in the recollection that more than once I came to Minnesota to make speeches in his behalf.

Tribute by President Coolidge

While vice president, Calvin Coolidge had a splendid opportunity to know and appreciate Senator Nelson. Here is his fine tribute to the rugged Viking written soon after his death:

All of the elder generation of the congress were grief-stricken to learn of the loss of Senator Knute Nelson of Minnesota. He had the love and respect of all who came in contact with him. He was a powerful influence for sound legislation in the senate, one who always sought, first and foremost, the public welfare without subserviency to the supposed interest of any class or section. He did not hesitate to disagree with those who were powerful, nor was he backward in supporting those who were weak. He considered the cause, rather than those who advocated it, and sought for approbation by promoting the welfare of his country. He was a leader in the highest and best sense of the term. He thought out what was right and in announcing his position drew to it public support, rather than undertaking to give all heed to the transient clamor of the hour and yield support to it with the lip service of a servile mind.

Senator Nelson was a great man. He had a broad comprehension of national problems and a facility in providing practical remedies. He was a tower of strength to his party. He kept his head when others were confused and he did right when others thought it was expedient to do wrong. It would be difficult to select a more representative American in thought and speech and action. He kept his own counsel and represented his own opinions.

Verdict of Senator Lodge

Henry Cabot Lodge, the distinguished statesman and author, served with Nelson two years in the national house and twenty-eight years in the United States senate. Speaking of Nelson at the memorial service in honor of Knute Nelson, in the United States senate, on March 9, 1924, he said:

He was a man of great vigor, both physically and mentally. He was very independent in his opinions and perfectly fearless in the assertion of his convictions. He was a strong man in every way, a good lawyer, and a most excellent senator, hard-working, diligent, and always master of any subject which he took up and to which he gave his attention. . . .

There never was a more thorough American than he, but he had a very loyal nature and always retained his affection for the land of his birth. As the years went on, by his force of character and his mental strength, he secured such a position in the senate that he was always listened to with close attention and all he said carried a great deal of weight.

I have seen him more than once, by one of his vigorous speeches, change votes in the senate in debate and carry other senators with him by the mere force of his character and good sense. Everyone recognized, whether they agreed with him or not, the honesty of his opinions and the strength in argument with which he presented them. He filled a large place in the senate and commanded a respect which is only given to men who have proved their qualities of sincerity and conviction. . . . To the senate, to the country, and to his state his death was not only a severe loss but leaves behind him an enduring sense of grief and an honored memory in the hearts of all who knew him and served with him.

For eight years Thomas R. Marshall of Indiana served as vice president, during the momentous administration of President Wilson, and he had ample opportunity of forming a correct opinion of the Minnesota senator. In a letter written to Simon Michelet, November 12, 1923, he said:

He had, in my opinion, a character that was above reproach, an intellect that was keen and farseeing, but, above all, he possessed what is so much needed now, intellectual honesty and the courage to stand by his convictions regardless of personal or party advantage.

No man under the flag had ever a greater love of the American institutions. A soldier in the Union army, his fight ended at Appomatox. He was an honor to his country and well deserves the grateful memory in which his life and public service are held by all those who came in contact with him.

It is the lives of such men as he that gives me hope for the perpetuity of the republic. It can not be but that from his ashes there will yet spring millions of men imbued with like desire to serve their day and generation well.

President Harding's Eulogy

President Harding, who served with Nelson in the senate, paid him this tribute:

He was a stalwart American and had a most useful public service, with a record of great work accomplished. Senator Nelson was an inspiring example of American opportunity. He came to us in poverty from Norway, acquired a competence, served in the war for the

Union, was governor of his state, and had a long and honored career in the senate. I held him in very high regard and deeply regret his passing.

William H. Taft, former president and chief justice of the United States supreme court, was deeply moved when apprised of Senator Nelson's death and remarked: "He was an old Roman. He was one of those men whose character made you think of the strength of the country. I deeply mourn his death."

A Great Newspaper's Tribute

And now, at the very end of this book, we shall quote this striking analysis of Knute Nelson's life and character by the Minneapolis Tribune:

When the tall pine of the north woods fell, a whole nation heard the crash and beheld the spacious void where there had been majestic grandeur outlined against the sky.

Some such thought as this swept the land when word went forth that Knute Nelson had come abruptly upon the end of his big, fine life.

Senator Nelson was indeed a tall pine among his countrymen. He was straight, strong and sound, and he was deep-rooted in the soil of honor and courage. He held his own against many a storm—bowed, it may be, but never broken; shaken sometimes, but always unafraid while the stress was on and when it had passed.

For many years this sturdy son of Norway, transplanted when a stripling and growing into rugged manhood in a new country, stood out bold, clean-cut and high in the skyline of American citizenship. His career is an inspiration to every native among us, and it is a challenge to every alien who has come this way, or yet may come, to make for himself here a place in the sun.

Knute Nelson knew in his youth and through some of his adult years what it was to be poor in purse and virtually without influential friendships. He never knew what it was to be poor in courage or without an earnest zeal to make the most of his talents and qualities.

There were stiff obstacles in his way, but over the tops of the worst of them he saw Victory beckoning and he wig-wagged that he was coming. The road he traveled in his earlier days was a rough one, but it was the very roughness of the going that did so much to stiffen his moral fiber, make fortitude second nature to him, and give him the mastery over all his mental and spiritual forces.

As a servant of his state and country, Senator Nelson rose to great occasions in great ways. He was a man of spacious mind and large purpose, the former enriched by tireless worthwhile reading,

the latter shaped and confirmed by the passion that burned within him to be of the best possible usefulness to his fellowmen. Such a man was not to be swerved from the course he deemed right by any loud clamor of the moment or by any urge of mere political ties.

Knute Nelson was as simple as he was sincere—both essential attributes of true human grandeur. He neither lagged too far behind the real spirit of the day nor forged too far ahead of it. He kept to that happy medium where the voice of his leadership could be heard and understood.

He was a sterling patriot in terms of his adopted country, but he also was a humanitarian who thought in terms of the human race. His were the types of deed and thought that are woven into the woof of the world's history, giving it color and character.

That a man like this "splendid Viking" should fall in the harness seems the fitness of things. He was an ardent toiler—happiest when he was busiest. No clocks for him save only as clocks might help to remind him that he should conserve his strength to work for the weal of others. At four score years his mental vision was still unclouded, his eagerness to serve undiminished, his outlook hopeful, his patriot heart serene, his purpose firm to answer when and where Duty might seem to call.

He will be missed from the councils of the nation, and missed from the life of the state to whose name he brought so much of luster.

APPENDIX

LIKE her husband, Mrs. Amanda Luse Cornwall, the wife of Professor A. R. Cornwall, had considerable literary ability and wrote a number of sketches and poems which were highly esteemed. She was a member of the faculty at Albion academy when she became the wife of Professor Cornwall and was also a friend of Senator Nelson. Her poem, "Koshkonong," is a beautiful production and will be of interest to the readers of this volume. We therefore publish it herewith in full:

KOSHKONONG

The sunset tips with roseate beams
  The rolling waves of Koshkonong,
And lights with gold and crimson gleams
  Aspens and oaks the trees among.
For fair October crowns the year
  With ripened leaves and fruitage rare,
The frost grape hangs its clusters near,
  And loosened nuts drop through the air.
Ah, Koshkonong, fair Koshkonong,
  No lake renowned in classic song
Can lovelier be than Koshkonong.

A crystal river stops to rest
  A moment on its seaward way;
Its wayward waves forget their quest
  Amid these sylvan scenes to stay.
The wild fowls haunt its reedy shores
  And half forget their passage time;
Rare plants some soft enchantment lures
  Beyond the limits of their clime.
Ah, Koshkonong, fair Koshkonong,
  Like wave and bird and flower I long
To stay forever, Koshkonong.

I stand among the mystic mounds
  Where warriors of an ancient race
Sleep in their happy hunting grounds.
  Is it in fancy that I trace
Their dusky forms in measured file
  Passing against the twilight sky?

Or do these fairy scenes beguile
  The wraiths of those who buried lie?
Ah, Koshkonong, fair Koshkonong,
  Thy subtle magic, still and strong,
May well recall them, Koshkonong.

Another spirit* haunts thy shores,
  A human spirit, sweet and wise,
Not one of all thy rarest flowers
  Or passing birds escape his eyes.
Our savants listen when he speaks
  And Europe waits his modest word.
But where thy soft wave gently breaks
  His voice and step are often heard.
Ah, Koshkonong, fair Koshkonong,
  Thy name with his will live in song
When mine has perished, Koshkonong.

And yet there is a sweeter spell
  Wrought by a charm beyond thy power,
Often with one who loves thee well,
  I've lingered till the twilight hour,
Have rowed into the sunset sky
  And, rocking in the waning light,
Have watched the wild duck, startled, fly;
  The golden eagle's shoreward flight.
Ah, Koshkonong, fair Koshkonong,
  Thy happy murmurings end my song;
They tell no secrets, Koshkonong.

*Thure Kumlien, naturalist, who spent years in research at Koshkonong, representing such celebrated institutions as the Stockholm, Leyden and British Museums in Europe and the Smithsonian Institute in America.

THE AUTHOR

MARTIN W. ODLAND, author of "The Life of Knute Nelson," is a graduate of the University of Wisconsin, with the class of 1898, and received his Master's degree from the same institution in 1900, after holding the Henrik Wergeland scholarship in literature and history. He was principal of the Deerfield high school, instructor in English and History in the Madison high school and in the Windsor township high school, Wisconsin, and in the Central high school of Minneapolis. Later he was managing editor of the Weekly Wisconsin State Journal, editor of the Star-Times at Hudson, Wisconsin, and of the Fergus Falls Free Press at Fergus Falls, Minnesota, and represented Otter Tail county in the Minnesota legislature.

The Minneapolis Tribune for March 28, 1926, says:

"Martin W. Odland, author of the biography of Senator Knute Nelson, of which the Minneapolis Tribune publishes the first instalment today, has written extensively on historical subjects. . . . He is the author of "The Saga of the Norsemen in America," published by the Norse-American Centennial committee last year.

"Mr. Odland's parents were neighbors of Senator Nelson's parents in Dane county, Wisconsin, and knew the future senator as a boy. Mr. Odland's teaching and newspaper work took him to the communities where Senator Nelson grew to manhood and began his political career. He knew both Mrs. Ingeborg Nelson and William Nelson, the senator's brother, and has met scores of pioneers who were friends of Minnesota's "Grand Old Man," while he was a struggling frontier lawyer and when he fought his first political battles in Minnesota.

"From these first-hand sources and from exhaustive study of newspaper files and documents in the library of the Minnesota State Historical society [supplemented by extensive correspondence and interviews with persons in Wisconsin and Minnesota having special knowledge of certain periods, incidents and phases of the senator's career], Mr. Odland has collected the material on which this biography is based. In assembling this data and its presentation, it has been necessary to study and picture men in public life, who were friends and opponents of Senator Nelson, and the political battles in which the Minnesota senator participated. These sidelights on the state's political history give added value to this, the first extended biography of Senator Nelson which has been written."

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